

**Fiona Dow**

**Representations of Hungarian Minority  
Identity in Romania from the Treaty of  
Trianon to the Fall of Ceauşescu**

***UCL-SSEES***

***PhD***

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## **Abstract:**

The thesis examines the role of the concept of identity under nationalism as a principle of classification, simultaneously subordinating all of social reality to its premise, functioning as a boundary-marker and lending the prevailing social order authority by giving it the appearance of being founded on a correspondence with an immutable, external, natural phenomenon. The actual working of the principle of classification is rendered invisible by this analogy drawn from nature, investing it with a self-evident quality, which embeds it in the habitus (the thought categories and assumptions held in common by the collectivity, which bind it together), in the realm of doxa (unquestioned, shared beliefs).

The contextuality of identity can be demonstrated by considering four different aspects, material, functional, affective and circumstantial. Material identity is distinguished by its high degree of stability, deriving from its permanence. It is the least problematic to the individual mind and as such situated within the doxa.

Nationalism invokes identity as its principle of classification based on a simple dichotomy (those who belong to the nation and therefore act as repositories of the national essence and those who do not), convincing the members of the collectivity that they are materially different from outsiders. Where nationalism provides the unifying concept the state appropriates its principle of classification. However, the nationalist ideal of complete structural homology between the administrative reach of the state and the territory inhabited by those deemed to belong to the nation is often unattainable, hence the problematic nature of minority identity.

It is against this backdrop that representations of Hungarian minority identity are analysed. The content of the representations (which straddle the political and cultural fields) is intimately linked to the dominant principle of classification, which shifted to that favoured by communism in the course of the period considered. Ceaușescu's revival of national sentiment as a cohesive force ensured that the presence of the Hungarians in Romania remained problematic, reinforcing attitudes, which still persist today.

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## Introduction

### ***I Objectives and Methodology***

Pál Bodor,<sup>1</sup> taking stock of the situation in Romania in 1990, provides an account of why an up to date programme on the minorities of that country was conspicuous by its absence at the elections after Ceaușescu's fall, summarising the predicament the Hungarians found themselves in:

"I know that a substantial proportion of Romanians, if not the majority:

a) Does not believe, does not know, denies that between the two World Wars and then even more ruthlessly afterwards, particularly in the Ceaușescu era, the Romanian minorities *were oppressed*.

b) They *regard* the principle elements of the enlightened modern system of minority rights as *privileges without justification, as a murderous assault against the sovereignty of the Romanian state and nation, if not, to make no bones about it, the "prelude" to an attack against the territorial integrity of the country*.

c) They confuse the concept of national sovereignty with national dominion, with ethnocracy.

d) They regard the minorities as tolerated newcomers who (in so far as they lay claim to the same rights as the Romanians of the Austro-Hungarian Empire demanded - deservedly! - and which were promised to them by the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions!) are abusing...the right of hospitality.

e) Amongst a substantial section of Romanian public opinion virtually every piece of news and scare story, analysis of history and of recent events, which justify suspicion,

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<sup>1</sup> Bodor, author and journalist, born in Budapest in 1930, lived in Romania between 1936 and 1983, during which time he established himself as a leading figure in intellectual life, contributing to the major Hungarian-language newspapers and periodicals. From 1951 to 1967, he was editor-in-chief of the Irodalmi Könyvkiadó [Literary Publishing House] and of Kritérium Kiadó [the most important publisher of material in Hungarian and other minority languages] and from 1970 to 1979 was in charge of the Hungarian and German-language broadcasts on Romanian state radio and television. These positions gave him privileged access to top-level meetings on cultural policy under the Ceaușescu regime. Since returning to Budapest in 1983, his literary career has continued to flourish, which has been recognized in the form of numerous awards.

fear and hatred of the minorities, particularly the Hungarians have been taken as authentic".<sup>2</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that when Bodor put pen to paper, the Hungarian population of Transylvania had officially been citizens of Romania since the entry into force of the Treaty of Trianon, which had been signed by the Hungarian delegation to the Peace Conference on 4th June 1920 in the Grand Trianon palace at Versailles<sup>3</sup>. The continued relevance of such attitudes is amply illustrated by the more recent controversy over the Law on the Hungarians living in Neighbouring Countries, more commonly known as the Status Law.<sup>4</sup>

The primary aim of the thesis is to arrive at a greater understanding of the phenomenon of national identity, in particular as it reveals itself amongst members of national minorities in a manner, which provides insights into the stability and resilience of their allegiance to an agreed collective image of themselves even whilst confronted by opposition, disputes over definitions, discrimination and outright persecution, the persistence of their separate identity being decried as irrational. The dynamic relationship between nationalism, national identity and representations of identity must be evaluated in order to gain insight into the historical development of collective bonds of solidarity founded on a concept of shared origin and destiny.<sup>5</sup>

The method selected to shed light on the matter in hand is a case study of the form and contents of one particular identity, which may be broadly labelled Hungarian

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<sup>2</sup> Pál Bodor, *A hisztéria szükségállapota. Kellemetlen kézikönyv Romániáról*. Szabad Tér Kiadó, Budapest, 1990, pp 4-5. Emphasis in the original. Unless otherwise specified all translations have been carried out by the author. For further information on the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions, see below, Chapter 2, p229 and following.

<sup>3</sup> Ignác Romsics, *A trianoni békeszerződés*, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2001, p205.

<sup>4</sup> In Hungarian, the reference is to Law LXII. of 2001 (*A szomszédos államokban élő magyarokról*). It was adopted by the Hungarian Parliament on June 19<sup>th</sup> of that year. For the debate surrounding it, see the Hungarian daily *Magyar Nemzet*, which printed more a hundred articles on the subject over a two-month period, including a detailed summary of its main provisions by István Pataky and the leader by Csaba Lukács on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Civic nationalism throws the blood kinship concept overboard, substituting loyalty to an avowed set of principles (as enshrined in a constitution, for example), but, as I shall maintain, the oath corresponds to a material (qualitative) metamorphosis.

(*anyaországi*)<sup>6</sup> identity, over the course of an extended period of time and through a change in regime, which endeavoured to impose its own vision of an alternative source of identity upon its subjects. In a very real sense Hungarian minority identity differs in substance from that of the *anyaországiak* rather than involving little more than a slight renegotiation or being a mere derivative. Indeed, I would venture that the evolution of post-Trianon *anyaországi* identity to this very day cannot be fathomed without proper scrutiny of the fate of the minorities as they continue to occupy a prominent position in the *anyaországi* mind.<sup>7</sup> The advantage of turning directly to the point at which rupture occurs (by which I refer to the break up of the Hungarian state and the transformation of traditional views of what being Hungarian involves) is that it permits us to attend the birth of a new identity, or at least a radical reassessment or reframing of an older identity to fit the changed circumstances. During this process certain mechanisms are thrown into high relief. On the *anyaországi* side, a choice had to be made between reconciling themselves to the international community's decision enshrined in the Trianon Treaty to regard the Transylvanian Hungarians as citizens of Romania and therefore accept that as Romanians they no longer formed part of the Hungarian nation and rejecting an artificial redrawing of boundaries that severed members of the nation from their compatriots. By opting for the latter, the *anyaországiak* were effectively insisting that culture or essence (or "material identity") transcend man-made frontiers. The moral dimension of the *anyaországi* appeals for revision derives from this contention that the natural order has been perverted, that the geographical unity of Hungary as ordained by Nature itself stretching to the Carpathians<sup>8</sup> has fallen victim to Romania's

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<sup>6</sup> To avoid confusion I shall henceforward employ the term Hungarian to refer to the Hungarians of Transylvania and the Hungarian *anyaországi*, plural *anyaországiak*, to indicate the Hungarians of Hungary proper, in other words of the country reduced to one third of its original size by the Treaty of Trianon.

<sup>7</sup> As shown once again by the Status Law (see footnote 4 above) and the Basic Treaties signed with the Ukraine (1993), Slovakia (1995) and Romania (1996). On the Basic Treaties, see Gáspár Biró, *Bilateral Treaties Between Hungary And Its Neighbours After 1989*, in *Geopolitics in the Danube Region*, edited by Ignác Romsics and Béla Király, Central European University Press, Budapest, 1999 (henceforth *Romsics 1999*), pp347-378.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Pál Teleki's article *Erdély helyzete Magyarországon és Európában [Transylvania's Place in Hungary and Europe]* in *Erdély*, Magyar Történelmi Társulat, Athenaeum, Budapest, 1940, pp9-20. The author, apart from being a renowned geographer, was Prime Minister of Hungary from July 1920

insatiable appetite for territorial aggrandisement (what this view ignores will be dealt with later). On the Transylvanian side a parallel, though more complex, choice between acceptance of their lot as Romanians (and whether this ought necessarily to be accompanied by a denial or abandonment of linguistic and cultural heritage) and clinging to their Hungarianness without making any concessions to their new nationality had to be weighed up. As we shall see, even where the former course was adopted, Romanian fears and scepticism meant that the Transylvanians were continually placed on the defensive, compelled to "prove" that they were not latent irredentists.

Although there have been many treatments of aspects of Hungarian minority identity in Hungarian, most of these have tended to concentrate on aspects such as literary output (for example Béla Pomogáts, *Változó Erdély [Changing Transylvania]*, Lucidus Kiadó, Budapest 2001, *Erdélyi tükör [Transylvanian Mirror]*, Kráter műhely egyesület, Budapest 1995; compilations of articles from literary journals, such as *Zord idő antológia*, Mentor Kiadó, Marosvásárhely, 1998 or András Gorombai's *Kisebbségi magyar irodalmak 1945-1990*, Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 1997), collections of articles by individual authors on a variety of topics with Transylvania as the common theme (István Nemeskürthy, *Édes Erdély, Erdélyi Krónika [Sweet Transylvania, Transylvanian Chronicle]*, Szabad Tér Kiadó, Debrecen, 1988; András Sütő, *Erdélyi Változatlanok [Unchanging Features of Transylvania]* Kossuth Egyetemi Kiadó, Debrecen, 2001), memoirs, eyewitness descriptions of the pernicious effects of government policies such as urbanisation or of specific events (including the sub-genre of what I would dub "refugee literature" popular during the 1980s, cf. László Kürti, *The Remote Borderland, Transylvania in the Hungarian Imagination*,<sup>9</sup> pp108-110, comprising testimonies such as Pál Köteles, *Búcsú Erdélytől, Egy menekülés anatómiája [Farewell to Transylvania, The Anatomy of an Escape]*, Eötvös Kiadó, Budapest, 1988; Péter Kende, *Erdélyből jöttek [They Came from Transylvania]*, Ifjúsági Lap- és Könyvkiadó, Debrecen, 1988; Tibor Franka, *Most jöttem Erdélyből [I Have Just Arrived from Transylvania]*, Láng Kiadó, Pécs,

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to April 1921 and again from February 1939 to his suicide in April 1941. For more detailed information see József Bölöny, *Magyarország kormányai 1848-1992*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1992; Ferenc Fodor, *Teleki Pál, Mike és Társa antikvárium*, Budapest, 2001 and István Csicsery-Rónay, Károly Vigh, *Teleki Pál és kora*, Occidental Press, Budapest, 1992.

<sup>9</sup> State University of New York Press, Albany, 2001, henceforth *Borderland*.

undated; the fruits of oral history research, for example, *Az én Erdélyem, Domonkos Pál Péter elmondja életét [My Transylvania, Péter Pál Domonkos Recounts His Life Story]*, Vita Kiadó, Budapest, 1988; a first hand recollection of the riots in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş, Előd Kincses, Marosvásárhely fekete márciusa [Black Spring in Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş]*, Püski Kiadó, Budapest, 1990), historical investigations of aspects of relevance (Gábor Vincze, *Magyar vagyon román kézen [Hungarian Property in Romanian Hands]*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 2000) and ethnographic studies into life in the Székelyföld region (works by Lajos Balázs and Gizella Cs. Gergely),<sup>10</sup> systematic theoretical perspectives have been thin on the ground, the valuable work of the KAM group in Csíkszereda (Regionális és Antropológiai Kutatások Központja, Centre for Regional and Anthropological Research), concentrating on analyses of particular themes (such as relations between Hungarian and Roma populations, popular beliefs, stability and change in local society and strategies adopted by the minority)<sup>11</sup> and the journal *Magyar Kisebbség* founded in 1922 in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* a partial exception to the rule. Even these, however, take Hungarian minority identity for granted, failing to dissect the underlying assumptions concerning what being Hungarian (whether *anyaországi* or Transylvanian) actually means.

Similar problems beset two German language surveys of the Hungarian minorities, one comprising a set of three essays covering the interwar years (on minority rights in the Carpathian Basin, minority rights and Hungarian foreign policy and legislation on

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<sup>10</sup> For example Balázs, *Szeretet fogott el a gyermek iránt [I was Seized by Love of the Child]*, Pallas-Akadémia Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1999 a description of customs surrounding birth and *Az én első tisztességes napom [My First Day of Respectability]*, Kriterion Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, 1994 on the subject of courtship and marriage and Gergely, *Asszonyi helytállás Székelyföldön [The Duty of Women in the Székelyföld]*, Magyar Napló, Budapest, 1999, focusing on the role of women in village life.

<sup>11</sup> *Egy-más mellett élés, A magyar-román, magyar-cigány kapcsolatról*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1996; József Gagy, *Jelek égen és földön, Hiedelem és helyi társadalom a Székelyföldön*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998; *Változásban? Elemzések a romániai magyar társadalomról*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1995 and Zoltán A. Bíró, *Stratégiák vagy kényszerpályák? Tanulmányok a romániai magyar társadalomról*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998, respectively.

minorities in Romania)<sup>12</sup> of limited scope, the other more ambitious, as reflected in its title *Rumänien und seine nationalen Minderheiten 1918 bis heute*, and at first glance more promising, offers an outline of the legal and to some extent political history of Romania as these affected the German, Jewish, Roma and Hungarian minorities. It does not, however, address the issue of identity as such and is further hampered by an absence of conceptualisation, leaving the reader none the wiser as to what Hungarian identity might comprise other than linguistic difference.<sup>13</sup>

My approach situates Hungarian identity within the framework of the broader concept of national identity rather than considering it as self-evident, arguing that the features deemed to be distinctive or unique cannot be interpreted except by being placed firmly in context, the justification for the relatively long time span covered (stretching from before the Hungarian minorities came into being in the first instance to the collapse of the Communist dictatorship in Romania) being precisely that general trends emerge gradually, that ideas cannot not divorced from the ebb and flow of historical circumstances (whereby the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1921 or the Communist takeovers in Hungary and Romania immediately following the Second World War influenced not only life trajectories, but also what forms of knowledge and representation were approved or suppressed),<sup>14</sup> nor can they be viewed as somehow distinct from the societies in which they are conceived and subsequently adopted (again thereby subtly altering the cognitive parameters and standards of normality within which thought may occur).

A huge literature on nationalism already exists and the plight of national minorities is increasingly becoming the object of attention, most frequently from the point of view of multiculturalism or as a factor in destabilising international relations.<sup>15</sup> In the

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<sup>12</sup> By Zoltán Szász, László Szarka and Simion Retegan in *Die Minderheiten zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen*, Schriften des Italienisch-Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Trient, Band 10, Herausgegeben von Umberto Corsini and David Zaffi, Duncker and Humblot, Berlin, 1993.

<sup>13</sup> Othmar Kolar, *Rumänien und seine nationalen Minderheiten 1918 bis heute*, Böhlau Verlag, Wien, 1997 (henceforth *Kolar*).

<sup>14</sup> A phrase borrowed from Mary Douglas; see her essay *Cultural Bias*, pp183-254 of *In The Active Voice*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1975.

<sup>15</sup> See for example such works as Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton, 1992; Paul Smith (editor), *Ethnic Groups in International Relations*, New York University Press, Dartmouth, 1991 and Will Kymlicka, *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995.



following section I will review the output of some of the most influential theorists of nationalism before moving to a more detailed consideration of the growing body of work devoted specifically to assessing whether a qualitative difference exists between “Eastern” and “Western” expressions of nationalism.<sup>16</sup> My deliberations throughout will be concentrated exclusively upon Europe, although many of the authors mentioned have also moved beyond such geographical confines. This is connected to one of the aims of the present undertaking, namely that of providing an in-depth account of two comparatively neglected nationalisms.<sup>17</sup>

## I.1 Theories of Nationalism

Studies of nationalism as an ideology and political force have tended to focus on three issues: determining when the nation was born, whether a state is a prerequisite for a nation and finally whether nationalism is inherently bad or whether it has some redeeming features.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, space constraints preclude consideration of many significant works, such as Elie Kedourie's *Nationalism*, Fourth Expanded Edition, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996 (originally 1960, henceforth *Kedourie*); Charles Tilly's *The Formation of Nation States in Western Europe*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1975; Montserrat Guibernau's *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1996 (henceforth *Guibernau*); Hans-Ulrich Wehler's *Nationalismus: Geschichte, Formen, Folgen*, C.H. Beck Verlag, München, 2001; Hagen Schulze's *States, Nations and Nationalism*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996; Walker Connor's *Ethnonationalism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994; Liah Greenfeld's *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992; Hugh Seton-Watson's *Nations and States*, Methuen, London, 1977; Miroslav Hroch's *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985; Karl Deutsch's *Nationalism and Social Communication*, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1966 (second edition) and Craig Calhoun's *Nationalism*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 1997, all of which I recommend for further study.

<sup>17</sup> From a Western European vantage point.

<sup>18</sup> For an invaluable summary of the main schools of thought as well as a guide to the critiques of each approach, see *Theories of Nationalism* by Umut Özkirimli, Palgrave, Houndmills, 2000, henceforth *Özkirimli*. On the three issues about which theorists quarrel, cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, London, 1991 (1983), p5 and John Armstrong's contribution to *Notions of Nationalism*, edited by Sukumar Periwal, Central European University Press, Budapest, 1995, henceforth *Periwal*, pp34-43. On the difficulties of reaching agreement on even the most basic

## I.2 The Modernists<sup>19</sup>

### Ernest Gellner

Ernest Gellner opens his seminal *Nations and Nationalism*,<sup>20</sup> with a set of concise definitions: "Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent."<sup>21</sup> Nationalist sentiment is either a feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle, or the feeling of satisfaction occasioned by its fulfilment and a nationalist movement is one actuated by a sentiment of this kind. The principle can be trespassed against in ways, which Gellner catalogues: "The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the

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questions relating to nationalism, see John Breuilly's *Reflections on Nationalism*, in Stuart Woolf, *Nationalism in Europe 1815 to the Present*, pp137-154 (henceforth *Breuilly 1996a*), pp137-8.

<sup>19</sup> Throughout I will be employing Anthony D. Smith's terminology, which sorts theories of nationalism into four principle groups, the primordialist, perennialist, modernist and ethno-symbolist. Although references to these are to be found scattered throughout his many works, a systematic and relatively concise set of definitions is given in *'Ethno-symbolism' and the Study of Nationalism* in Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (henceforth *Myths*), Oxford University Press, 1999, pp3-19. In brief, primordialism refers to the belief that nations are the natural divisions of humanity and that the key to the nature, power and incidence of nations and nationalism lies in the rootedness of the nation in kinship, ethnicity and the genetic bases of human existence (*Myths*, pp3-4. See also Özkirimli, pp64-84). Perennialist denotes those who hold that nations have existed throughout recorded history, but do not see them as part of the natural order (*Myths*, p5). Modernists regard both primordialism and perennialism as expressions of nationalism itself and hence fatally flawed. For them, the nation is not only recent, but also novel and a product of the processes of modernization. The era of the French Revolution marks the entrance of nationalism on to the world stage (*Myths*, p6). Ethno-symbolists attribute the power of nationalism to its myths, memories, traditions and symbols of ethnic heritages and argue that modern nations have their roots in pre-modern ethnic communities (*Myths*, pp9 and 13). See also *Op. cit.*, pp99-101, and his *Nationalism and Modernism*, Routledge, London, 1998 (henceforth *Smith 1998*). Since the work of the "classical" theorists of nationalism surveyed below challenges primordialism and perennialism and since the representations of national identity upon which the present thesis focuses could be assigned to either of these categories I have not felt it necessary to explore them in depth at this juncture. My stance can be condensed as follows: perennialists and primordialists both take the nationalist principle of classification, which seeks to project itself back through time and thereby appear "natural" and inevitable, at face value, swallowing it hook, line and sinker. Cf. Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, Fontana, London, 1994, p3.

<sup>20</sup> Blackwell, Oxford, 1983, henceforth *Gellner*.

<sup>21</sup> *Gellner*, p1.

members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once, not incorporating all the nationals and yet also including some non-nationals. Or again, a nation may live, unmixed with foreigners, in a multiplicity of states, so that no single state can claim to be *the* national one".<sup>22</sup> However, one such anomaly towers above all others: "if the rulers of the political unit belong to a nation other than that of the majority of the ruled, this, for nationalists, constitutes a quite outstandingly intolerable breach of political propriety. This can occur either through the incorporation of the national territory in a larger empire, or by the local domination of an alien group".<sup>23</sup> Ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones and within a state they should not separate the power-holders from the rest.

Taking Max Weber's description of the state as the agency within society, which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence as his starting point, Gellner adds that it represents an elaboration of the social division of labour, more specifically: "the state is the specialization and concentration of order-maintenance".<sup>24</sup> The problem of nationalism does not crop up in stateless societies. Where, however, politically centralized units are the norm it is a different story. Human history can be split into three fundamental stages, the pre-agrarian, the agrarian and the industrial. During the latter the presence of the state is inescapable.<sup>25</sup> Although the nation appears to be an inherent attribute of humanity it is not. Both nations and states are contingencies.<sup>26</sup> A nation is present when individuals share the same culture (in the sense of a system of ideas and signs and of ways of behaving and communicating) and where they recognise each other as belonging to it: "nations are the artefacts of men's convictions and loyalties and solidarities".<sup>27</sup> The act of recognition itself is the vital element rather than what they have in common.

In order to explain why the pre-industrial world is one where nations do not exist, Gellner takes stock of the salient features of agrarian society, more particularly analysing the relationship between culture and power. During the agrarian stage, the

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<sup>22</sup> *Op. cit.*, p1; emphasis in the original.

<sup>23</sup> *Op. cit.*, p1.

<sup>24</sup> *Op. cit.*, p4.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, p5.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

most significant achievements are literacy, the establishment of a reasonably permanent and standardized script, which opened the possibility of cultural and cognitive storage and centralization, and the rise of a clerical class or estate, the clerisy, whose ability to read and write the source of their prestige.<sup>28</sup> In such societies the ruling stratum (which can be sub-divided into a number of more specialized layers, such as warriors, priests, clerics, administrators and burghers) is rigidly set apart from the great majority of direct agricultural producers, or peasants. Its ideology exaggerates the inequality of classes, with great emphasis on cultural differentiation rather than homogeneity as a means of reducing friction and ambiguity between them. Below the horizontally stratified minority at the top, the petty communities of the laterally separated lay members of society are to be found. Although these divisions are functional, they are not presented as such: “by externalizing, making absolute and underwriting inequalities, it fortifies them and makes them palatable, by endowing them with the aura of inevitability, permanence and naturalness. That which is inscribed into the nature of things and is perennial, is consequently not personally, individually offensive, nor psychically intolerable”.<sup>29</sup> Almost everything in an agro-literate society therefore militates against the definition of political units in terms of cultural boundaries. Only the clerisy has a “cultural policy” and it is anxious to strengthen its own position by making itself indispensable. The complementary roles it ascribes to itself and the laity formally preclude its own universalisation.<sup>30</sup>

Industrial society relies on sustained and perpetual growth, on an expected and continuous improvement.<sup>31</sup> The old stability of the social role structure is incompatible with growth and innovation; high productivity requires a complex and refined division of labour, which is subject to rapid change. Mobility thus becomes the order of the day and to permit it unspecialized and standardized training becomes

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<sup>28</sup> A condensed and slightly reworked version of the characteristics of agrarian and industrial societies can be found in Gellner's essay *The Coming of Nationalism and Its Interpretation: The Myths of Nation and Class* (henceforth *Gellner 1996*), in Gopal Balakrishnan (editor) *Mapping the Nation*, Verso, London and New York, 1996, (henceforth *Balakrishnan*), pp98-145. On literacy as a badge of rank, see *Gellner 1996*, pp101-2.

<sup>29</sup> *Gellner*, pp8-11, quotation, p11.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, p16.

<sup>31</sup> *Op. cit.*, p22.

essential. Modern society “provides a very prolonged and fairly thorough training for all its recruits, insisting on certain shared qualifications: literacy, numeracy, basic work habits and social skills, familiarity with basic technical and social skills. For the large majority of the population the distinctive skills involved in working life are superimposed on the basic training, either on the job or as part of a much less prolonged supplementary training; and the assumption is that anyone who has completed the generic training common to the entire population can be re-trained for most other jobs without too much difficulty”.<sup>32</sup> The reproduction of social individuals and groups can be carried out according to the centralized method,<sup>33</sup> whereby local socialization is complemented by the activities of an educational agency, which is distinct from the local community and takes on board the preparation of young people for being handed back to the wider society to assume their roles within it.<sup>34</sup> Another name given by Gellner for this removal and reinsertion is exo-training (or education proper)<sup>35</sup> and is one of the hallmarks of a modern society.

At the same time the content of work undergoes change. In industrial society, work does not mean moving matter: it is no longer the manipulation of things, but of meanings.<sup>36</sup> The implications of this are momentous: explicit and reasonably precise communication becomes generally, pervasively used. In the course of their work individuals “must constantly communicate with a large number of other men, with whom they frequently have no previous association, and with whom communication must consequently be explicit, rather than relying on context. They must also be able to communicate by means of written, impersonal, context-free, to-whom-it-may-concern type messages. Hence these communications must be in the same shared and standardized linguistic medium and script. The educational system which guarantees this social achievement becomes large and is indispensable, but at the same time it no

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<sup>32</sup> *Op. cit.*, p28.

<sup>33</sup> Gellner contrasts this with the “one-to-one or on-the-job principle” when a family, kin unit, village, tribal segment or similar fairly small unit takes the infants born into it and by obliging them to take part in communal life, plus utilizing specific methods such as exercises, precepts, rites of passage and so forth, turns them into adults resembling the preceding generation. *Gellner*, p29.

<sup>34</sup> *Gellner*, pp29-30.

<sup>35</sup> *Gellner*, p31. He then labels the intra-community training as “acculturation”.

<sup>36</sup> *Gellner*, pp32-3. See also *Gellner 1996*, p106.

longer possesses monopoly of access to the written word: its clientele is co-extensive with the society at large".<sup>37</sup>

The educational infrastructure needed for this vast undertaking is too costly for any organization other than the state and only the state can control so crucial a function. Culture now plays a radically different part in human affairs: "Culture is no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce. For a given society, it must be one in which they can all breathe and speak and produce; so it must be the *same* culture. Moreover, it must now be a great or high (literate, training-sustained) culture, and it can no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture or tradition".<sup>38</sup>

The third vital function performed by the state is quality control: the educational product cannot be shoddy and sub-standard, the unified culture must be effectively passed on.<sup>39</sup> The imperative of exo-socialization is the main clue as to why state and culture must be intimately linked.

The secret of nationalism, where a high culture pervades the whole of society, defines it and must be kept alive by the polity, is thus laid bare.<sup>40</sup> Nationalism is not the awakening of an old, latent, dormant force as the ideologues would have it, but "the consequence of a new form of social organization, based on deeply-internalized, education-dependent high cultures, each protected by its own state".<sup>41</sup> A viable state of this type cannot fall below a certain minimum size and there is only room for a limited number of them. Furthermore, although nationalism has determined the norm for the legitimacy of political units in the modern world: "Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent, though long-delayed political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: *that*

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<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.*, p35.

<sup>38</sup> *Gellner*, pp37-8. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>39</sup> *Op. cit.*, p38.

<sup>40</sup> *Op. cit.*, p18. See also p35.

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, p48. See also p95.

is a reality.”<sup>42</sup> Nationalism engenders nations, not the other way round.<sup>43</sup> It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals, held together primarily by a shared culture in place of a complex structure of local groups.<sup>44</sup>

Gellner employs a botanical analogy to describe the new situation, comparing cultures with wild and cultivated varieties of plants. The wild kinds are produced and reproduce themselves spontaneously as parts of everyday life without conscious design, supervision, surveillance or special fertilizers. The cultivated or garden cultures, in spite of having evolved from their wild cousins, are richer, but are dependent upon being tended by skilled personnel and would wither away without being fed with distinctive nutrients. Not every wild culture can become a high culture and those without serious prospects bow out without bearing a nationalist fruit. Where the prospects are good, however, the human carriers of culture slug it out amongst themselves for available populations and state-space. This is one species of nationalist conflict. Once the high culture is expected to shoulder the burden assigned to it, a political infrastructure cannot be dispensed with.<sup>45</sup> Industrialism did not arrive simultaneously in all parts of the world, or in the same manner. The differences in arrival-time split humanity into rival groups and became acute if the communities could make use of cultural, genetic or similar indicators of differentiation left over from the agrarian past.<sup>46</sup>

National sentiment is more than a mere cold-blooded cost-benefit analysis. Prior to the advent of nationalism, it made no sense to ask whether peasants cherished their culture, as it was like the air they breathed; they would only have noticed its absence.

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<sup>42</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp48-9. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, p55.

<sup>44</sup> *Op. cit.*, p57. As Gellner goes on to say, this is exactly the opposite of what nationalist beliefs proclaim.

<sup>45</sup> *Gellner*, pp50-51. He also uses the analogy of the breathing chamber or aquarium, pp51-2.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, p52. On pp43-50, Gellner draws attention to the discrepancy between the number of potential and of actual nationalisms taking languages as the marker of difference, which could fuel a nationalism. His conclusion is that “For every effective nationalism, there are *n* potential ones, groups defined either by shared culture, inherited from the agrarian world or by some other link (on the “precedent” principle) which *could* give hope of establishing a homogenous industrial community, but which nevertheless do not bother to struggle, which fail to activate their potential nationalism, which do not even try” (p45, emphasis in the original). The nationalist urge is relatively weak, in other words.

The catalyst for change was to be found in the new opportunities: “But when labour migration and bureaucratic employment became prominent features within their social horizon, they soon learned the difference between dealing with a co-national, one understanding and sympathizing with their culture, and someone hostile to it. This very concrete experience taught them to be aware of their culture, and to love it (or, indeed, to wish to be rid of it) without any conscious calculation of advantages and prospects of social mobility. In stable self-contained communities culture is often quite invisible, but when mobility and context-free communication come to be the essence of social life, the culture in which one has been *taught* to communicate becomes the core of one’s identity”.<sup>47</sup>

Gellner’s sophisticated theory pays little heed to the identity component of nationalism, as good as ignoring its emotional side, the nuances of how the individual and collectivity’s perception of self (self-image) holds so firm a grip. It is also weak in its treatment of the past. No social formation exists without antecedents and actively constructs its own past. Once the nationalist principle of classification<sup>48</sup> becomes established and literally and metaphorically re-creates the world in its own image, a particular relationship with the past is established.

The particular strength of Gellner’s approach resides in his account of the link between the need for standardized communication and widening interaction amongst members of the same national community, the rise of state-organized education<sup>49</sup> and the transmission of the shared meanings and patterns of behaviour, which Bourdieu refers to as the *doxa*.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Op. cit.*, p61.

<sup>48</sup> In other words, a principle of classification based on a concept of nationhood with an irreducible, material distinction being drawn between national collectivities - even if this distinction resides in loyalty to a unique constitution or set of civic values expressed in a constitution - with greater or lesser degrees of permeability of the frontiers thereby drawn. This will be dealt with in detail in Chapter One below.

<sup>49</sup> To which it might be useful to add the role of qualifications as certificates of aptitude in state-sanctioned skills, which open access to greater material resources in the form of boosted earning-power.

<sup>50</sup> On the *doxa*, see Chapter One below. For critiques of Gellner’s works, see Özkirimli, pp137-143 and for Hroch’s objections, p164; John A. Hall and Ian Jarvie’s *The Social Philosophy of Ernest Gellner*, Rodopi, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Georgia, 1996, pp71-189 (cf. Gellner’s immediate riposte in *Reply to*



## Eric Hobsbawm

In *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*,<sup>51</sup> Eric Hobsbawm states that the meaning of the word nation as used today is no older than the eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup> What constitutes the nation itself has been a tough nut for scholars to crack, which is hardly surprising: "For the chief characteristic of this way of classifying groups of human beings is that, in spite of the claims of those who belong to it that it is in some ways primary and fundamental for the social existence, or even the individual identification of its members, no satisfactory criterion can be discovered for deciding which of the many human collectivities should be labelled in this way".<sup>53</sup> For Hobsbawm, the nation is a recent newcomer in human history and is the product of particular, localized or regional conjunctures. Language, ethnicity or any other features, which might be adduced to show that a nation is present, are "fuzzy, shifting and ambiguous, and as useless for the purposes of the traveller's orientation as cloud-shapes are compared to landmarks".<sup>54</sup> The alternative is to resort to subjective definitions, such

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Critics on pp623-686, particularly pp623-639); John A. Hall (editor), *The State of the Nation*, Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998; Smith 1998, pp27-46; John A. Hall, *Nationalisms, Classified and Explained*, in *Periwal*, pp8-33; John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1993, henceforth *Breuilly 1993*, pp416-8, *Breuilly 1996a*, pp139-145 and 150-3 and his essay *Approaches to Nationalism*, in *Balakrishnan*, pp146-174, (henceforth *Breuilly 1996*), pp154-6 and pp161-2; Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism*, Fourth Expanded Edition, Blackwell, Oxford, 1996, originally 1960, henceforth *Kedourie*, pp142-144; Guibernau, pp49-50 and 76-80, and Greenfeld, *op. cit.*, the very title of which disputes Gellner's core proposition. For her, the nation represents the constitutive element of modernity: "In this belief, I reverse the order of precedence, and therefore of causality, which is usually, if sometimes tacitly, assumed to exist between national identity and nations, and nationalism and modernity: namely that national identity is simply the identity characteristic of nations, while nationalism is a product or reflection of major components of modernization. Rather than define nationalism by its modernity, I see modernity as defined by nationalism" (p18 and cf. p21, where she adds: "Historically, the emergence of nationalism predated the development of every significant component of modernization").

<sup>51</sup> Second edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992 (originally 1990), henceforth *Hobsbawm*.

<sup>52</sup> *Hobsbawm*, p3. He traces the gradual changes in meaning of the word in various languages on pp15-20.

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit.*, p5.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6.

as Renan's nation as a daily plebiscite or the Austro-Marxist stance that "nationality" adhered to persons wherever they lived and whoever they lived with if they chose to claim it.<sup>55</sup> The objection, which he raises to both attempts, is that "defining a nation by its members' consciousness of belonging to it is tautological and provides only an *a posteriori* guide to what a nation is. Moreover it can lead the incautious into extremes of voluntarism".<sup>56</sup> In addition, the insistence upon choice subordinates the multiple and complex ways in which humans define and redefine themselves as members of groups to the single option of the nation. Hobsbawm adopts an agnostic posture, operating on the "assumption [that] any sufficiently large body of people whose members regard themselves as members of a "nation", will be treated as such".<sup>57</sup> It is not primary or unchanging and is a social entity only insofar as it relates to a certain kind of modern territorial state: "The equation nation = state = people, and especially sovereign people, undoubtedly linked nation to territory, since structure and definition of states were now essentially territorial. It also implied a multiplicity of nation-states so constituted, and this was indeed a necessary consequence of popular self-determination".<sup>58</sup>

Hobsbawm agrees with Gellner on the issue of the elements of artefact, invention and social engineering, which enter into the making of nations. They have to be analysed in terms of political, technical, administrative, economic and other conditions and requirements because they are located at the point of intersection of politics, technology and social transformation. In brief, nations are dual phenomena, constructed from above, but incomprehensible unless also addressed from the vantage point of the hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not

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<sup>55</sup> The reference is to Ernest Renan's famous lecture *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* delivered in 1882. For an abridged translation, see *What Is A Nation? in Nationalism in Europe 1815 to the Present*, edited by Stuart Woolf, Routledge, London and New York, 1996, pp48-60. Cf. Smith's comments in *Myths*, pp32-3. On Austro-Marxism, see for example Charles C. Herod's *The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought. The Concept of Nations with History and Nations without History* (henceforth *Herod*), Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1976, pp39-65 and Otto Bauer's *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 2000 (henceforth *Bauer*), which contains a particularly informative introduction by Ephraim Nimni on pp xv-xlv (henceforth *Nimni 2000*).

<sup>56</sup> Hobsbawm, pp7-8.

<sup>57</sup> *Op. cit.*, p8.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p19.

necessarily national and still less nationalist. His major criticism of Gellner is that in his eagerness to fathom the process of modernization from above, he loses sight of the view from below. Three correctives must be taken into account: firstly, that official ideologies are not guides to what is in the minds of even the most loyal of citizens; secondly, that it cannot be simply taken as read that national identification excludes or is always or indeed ever superior to the remainder of the set of identifications, which make up the social being and thirdly that national identification and what it is believed to imply can shift in time. Finally, from Hroch, Hobsbawm takes on board the insights that national consciousness develops unevenly among the social groupings and regions of a country and that it spreads to the popular masses last.<sup>59</sup>

As far as nationalism is concerned, Hobsbawm once again concurs with Gellner on it being a principle advocating congruence between the political and national unit, supplementing it with the idea that the political duty of the national to the polity overrides all other public obligations and in extreme cases such as war all other obligations of whatever kind.<sup>60</sup>

In his broad historical survey of nationalism from its birth, Hobsbawm concentrates on three main periods, from the French Revolution to 1918, from 1918 to 1950 and, finally, the late twentieth century.<sup>61</sup> During the first, he examines some of the main tenets of liberal nationalism.<sup>62</sup> The nation had to be of sufficient size to form an economically and culturally viable unit of development. If it did not achieve certain dimensions it had no justification. Hobsbawm refers to this as “the threshold principle.”<sup>63</sup> Self-determination applied only to such nations.

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<sup>59</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp9-12. The reader will note the care, which Hobsbawm takes to avoid the word „identity”. Hobsbawm returns to the issue of multiple loyalties when examining the principles on which political appeals to the masses were based, notably the class appeal of the socialists, the confessional appeal of religious denominations and the appeal of nationality: „Men and women did not choose collective identification as they chose shoes, knowing that one could only put on one pair at a time. They had, and still have, several attachments and loyalties simultaneously, including nationality, and are simultaneously concerned with various aspects of life, any of which may at one time may be foremost in their minds, as occasion suggests. For long periods of time these different attachments would not make incompatible demands on a person” (p123).

<sup>60</sup> *Op. cit.*, p9.

<sup>61</sup> *Özirimli*, pp119-120.

<sup>62</sup> For this term, see, for example, p24 and p32. Cf. the discussion of Kohn et al below.

<sup>63</sup> *Hobsbawm*, p31.

Nation-building was seen as a process of expansion: social evolution increased the scale of human groupings from family and tribe to county and canton, local to regional, the national and eventually the global. In practice this meant that national movements were expected to press for unification. That nation-states would be ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous was accepted readily "as there were many parts of Europe and much of the rest of the world where nationalities were so obviously mixed up on the same territory, that a purely special unscrambling of them seemed to be quite unrealistic".<sup>64</sup> Moreover it appeared logical that "small and backward" nationalities had everything to gain by merging into greater nations, making their contributions to humanity through these.<sup>65</sup> The conclusion that some of these small nationalities and languages were doomed to extinction was not chauvinistic; it did not testify to innate hostility against them, especially since major nations could foster the dialects, lesser languages, historic and folklore traditions of sub-communities within them.<sup>66</sup>

All in all throughout the era of triumphant bourgeois liberalism (1830-1880) only three criteria allowed a people to be regarded as a nation (provided it passed the threshold): historic association with a current state or one with a fairly lengthy and recent past; the existence of a long-established cultural elite with a written national literary and administrative vernacular and a proven capacity for conquest.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, p33.

<sup>65</sup> *Op. cit.*, p34. As László Kontler in his *A History of Hungary*, Palgrave, Houndmills, 2002 (henceforth *Kontler*) comments, Hungarian Liberals in the nineteenth century believed that the extension of individual rights would render collective rights for the nationalities superfluous and that they would be happy to assimilate voluntarily into the Hungarian nation (pp241-2). Cf. Emil Niederhauser's *The National Question in Hungary*, in *The National Question in Europe in Historical Context*, edited by Mikuláš Teich and Roy Porter, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1993, pp248-269, particularly p253. For Lajos Kossuth's position on the issue, see Miklós Molnár's *A Concise History of Hungary*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001 (henceforth *Molnár*), p173 and Kossuth's article from 26<sup>th</sup> April, 1849 *A magyar-román megbékélés feltételeiről* (*On the Conditions for Reconciliation between the Hungarians and the Romanians*), in *Kossuth Lajos üzenetei*, compiled by György Szabad, IKVA Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1994, pp169-171. See also Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1988 (henceforth *Szporluk*), pp155-7.

<sup>66</sup> *Hobsbawm*, pp34-5. Here Hobsbawm is defending Engels. For a useful summary of the latter's pronouncements on the subject of small nations, see *Herod*, pp6-38.

<sup>67</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp37-8.

In the years between 1880 and the First World War a new breed of nationalism came to the fore, which differed from its liberal predecessor in three respects. It abandoned the “threshold principle”: “Henceforth any body of people considering themselves a “nation” claimed the right to self-determination which, in the last analysis, meant the right to a separate sovereign independent state for their territory”.<sup>68</sup> As a consequence of “this multiplication of potential “unhistorical” nations”, ethnicity and language became the central, even the only accepted indicators of potential nationhood. Lastly, national sentiments within the established nation-states veered sharply to the political right.<sup>69</sup>

Ethnic nationalism received a boost from the increasingly massive geographical migrations of peoples and the transformation of the concept of race,<sup>70</sup> whilst nationalism in general was helped along by the resistance of traditional groups threatened by the onrush of modernity and the mushrooming of new classes and strata in the urbanizing societies.<sup>71</sup> These were further bolstered by the political changes, which made individuals receptive to national appeals, namely the democratization of politics and the creation of the modern administrative, citizen-mobilizing and citizen-influencing state.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Op. cit.*, p102.

<sup>69</sup> *Op. cit.*, p102. In the previous chapter, Hobsbawm examines “feelings of collective belonging which already existed and which could (...) fit in with modern states and nations” (p46), which he calls “proto-national” bonds. They are of two types: the supra-local forms of popular identification, which go beyond those circumscribing the actual spaces in which people spent most of their lives and the political ties and vocabularies of select groups more directly linked to states and institutions, and which are capable of eventual generalization, extension and popularization (pp46-7). In his opinion “neither can be legitimately identified with the modern nationalism that passes as their lineal extension, because they had or have no necessary relation with the unit of territorial political organization which is a crucial criterion of what we understand as a “nation” today” (p47). They include language (pp51-63); ethnicity (pp63-66); religion (pp67-73) and lasting statehood (pp73-76). On the question of why liberals found the nation alluring in the early days, see p40 where Hobsbawm attributes its links to the great liberal slogans as the product of long association instead of logical necessity, as liberty and equality are to fraternity: “To put it another way, because the nation itself was historically novel, it was opposed by conservatives and traditionalists, and therefore attracted their opponents”. Again on the slippage to the right, see p121.

<sup>70</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp107-8.

<sup>71</sup> *Op. cit.*, p109.

<sup>72</sup> *Op. cit.*, p110.

From 1918 to 1950 the nineteenth century principle of nationality triumphed as the result of two unintended events, the collapse of the multinational empires of Central and Eastern Europe and the Russian Revolution. The Wilsonian effort to make state frontiers coincide with national ones was stillborn due to its “utter impracticability”.<sup>73</sup> Most of the new states were every bit as multinational as the structures they were intended to replace with oppressed minorities filling the vacancy left by oppressed peoples. This meant that post-1919 the aspirations of the typical national movement were directed against national states and therefore essentially separatist.<sup>74</sup> Another feature of national identification after the war was that it acquired new means of expressing itself in high technology societies, firstly in the shape of the mass media (press, cinema, radio), which standardized, homogenized and altered popular ideologies as well as permitting their exploitation for propaganda purposes by private interests and states. The latter was, however, not as far-reaching in impact as the breaking down of the divisions between the private and local spheres in which citizens normally lived and the public and national one. The second means of bridging the gap between private and public worlds was sport.<sup>75</sup> Militant nationalism, even if it was not a reflex of despair, compensated for the failure, impotence and apparent inability of other political projects to realize people’s hopes: “It was the utopia of those who had lost the old utopias of the age of Enlightenment, the programme of those who had lost faith in other programmes, the prop of those who had lost the support of older political and social certainties”.<sup>76</sup> The final period is that of the late twentieth century, in which nationalism has declined as a vector of historical change.<sup>77</sup> The upheavals following the dissolution

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<sup>73</sup> *Op. cit.*, p132.

<sup>74</sup> *Op. cit.*, p139.

<sup>75</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp141-3.

<sup>76</sup> *Hobsbawm*, p144. In the mid-1930s, the Communist movement tried to recapture the symbols of patriotism and an antifascist nationalism fought literally (in Spain) and metaphorically in an international ideological civil war, in which a section of numerous national ruling classes opted for an international political alignment of the right, and the states identified with it. Such domestic parties jettisoned the appeal to xenophobic patriotism. Workers and intellectuals made an international choice, which happened to reinforce a national sentiment. Thus nationalism became associated with the left in the antifascist period. This was subsequently confirmed by the experience of anti-imperial struggle in colonial countries (pp145-8). Cf. *Özkirimli*, pp119-120.

<sup>77</sup> *Hobsbawm*, p163.

of the Soviet Union Hobsbawm describes as the chickens of Versailles coming home to roost,<sup>78</sup> or, to phrase it less figuratively, the unfinished business of 1918-1921.<sup>79</sup> Nationalism was the beneficiary of these events, but did not contribute a great deal to bringing them about.<sup>80</sup> It cannot provide a solution to the problem of the age, which arises from a combination of international population movements with unprecedented social and economic transformations.<sup>81</sup> At best, ethnic identity can be held up like an amulet to stem the tide. In “the western ex-communist societies” the ensuing disorientation is intensified by the end of life as most of the inhabitants had learned to live it. Hobsbawm quotes an unpublished paper by Hroch for whom nationalism or ethnicity in the region today is a substitute for factors of integration in a disintegrating society.<sup>82</sup> National identity functions as a device for delineating the community of the innocent and, by extension, the guilty responsible for the unpleasant predicament of the present since Communist regimes are no longer available as scapegoats. The phenomenon, however, is not confined to post-communist states, however, but is universal.<sup>83</sup> For Hobsbawm the anguish and desire to find firm bearings, which the hunger to belong articulates are: “symptoms of sickness rather than diagnoses, let alone therapy. Nevertheless, they create the illusion of nations and nationalism as an irresistibly rising force ready for the third millennium”.<sup>84</sup> Further weight is lent to the impression by attaching the semantic label of nation to all states. Consequently all movements seeking territorial autonomy tend to attach it to themselves.<sup>85</sup> In reality, the nation is in the process of being eroded as it has to relinquish many of its staple functions, such as running the economy, to intergovernmental

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<sup>78</sup> Here I merge his images from Hobsbawm, p164 and p259 of *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe Today*, in Balakrishnan, pp255-266.

<sup>79</sup> *Op. cit.*, p165.

<sup>80</sup> *Op. cit.*, p167.

<sup>81</sup> *Op. cit.*, p171. He presents the case in greater detail in Balakrishnan, pp255-266.

<sup>82</sup> Hobsbawm, p173 and in Balakrishnan, p261. The title of the 1991 paper is *Nationale Bewegungen früher und heute. Ein europäischer Vergleich*.

<sup>83</sup> Hobsbawm, p174.

<sup>84</sup> *Op. cit.*, p177.

<sup>85</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp177-8.

organizations.<sup>86</sup> It is trapped between the rock of supranationalism and the hard place of infranationalism.<sup>87</sup>

In his earlier collaboration with Terence Ranger *The Invention of Tradition*,<sup>88</sup> Hobsbawm demonstrates that many of the most venerable traditions, whose origins seem shrouded in the mists of antiquity, actually date from much more recently. An “invented tradition” is defined as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past”.<sup>89</sup> They are responses to novel situations, which take the form of reference to old situations, or which build up their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition,<sup>90</sup> and crop up more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which “old” traditions had been designed, rendering the latter obsolete. Since the Industrial Revolution, invented traditions could be clustered into three overlapping types: those promoting or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities; those legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority and those whose principle aim was socialization, instilling beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> *Op. cit.*, p181. Hobsbawm is quick to point out that the number of intergovernmental international organizations grew from 123 in 1951 through 280 in 1972 to 365 in 1984.

<sup>87</sup> *Op. cit.*, p187.

<sup>88</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Canto Edition 1992 (original date of publication 1983), henceforth *Invention*. See also Özkirimli, pp116-118.

<sup>89</sup> *Invention*, p1.

<sup>90</sup> *Op. cit.*, p2.

<sup>91</sup> *Op. cit.*, p9. Hobsbawm does not suggest, however, that the invention of tradition is confined to either „traditional” or modern societies. Nor does he claim that older forms of community and authority structure and the traditions associated with them were unadaptable or that „new” traditions simply resulted from the inability to recycle old ones. Adaptation took place for old uses in new conditions and by utilizing old models for new purposes. Old institutions with established functions, references to the past and ritual idioms, such as the Catholic church, might need to go down this route (p5). See also p263 and Özkirimli, p117.



At this point the historian's craft came into its own: "For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion".<sup>92</sup>

This is made particularly clear by the history of the nation, since what has been absorbed into the fund of knowledge "is not what has actually been preserved in popular memory, but what has been selected, written, pictured, popularized and institutionalized by those whose function it is to do so".<sup>93</sup> Indeed by virtue of making a contribution, consciously or unconsciously, to the creation, dismantling and restructuring of images of the past, an activity, which straddles the spheres of specialist investigation and of politics, they are sucked into this process, like it or not. The era of the mass-production of traditions (1870-1914) coincided with the emergence of mass politics within the framework of states, which, seen from below "increasingly defined the largest stage on which the crucial activities determining human lives as subjects and citizens were played out".<sup>94</sup> The state increasingly registered and regulated the civil existence of its subjects and its "probing interventions" proved decisive.<sup>95</sup> In developed countries, the "national economy", its area coextensive with that of a state provided the framework within which economic transactions took place, whilst the standardization of administration, law and education inside the same boundaries made individuals receptive to the concept of nationhood. To influence the government or its policy was the main objective of domestic politics and the common man was entitled to take part in it: "It was thus natural that the classes within society, and in particular the working class, should tend to identify themselves through nationwide political movements or organizations ('parties'), and equally natural that de facto these should operate essentially within the confines of the nation. Nor is it surprising that movements seeking to represent an entire society or 'people' should envisage its existence essentially in terms of that of an independent or at least an autonomous state. State, nation and society converged".<sup>96</sup>

Viewed from above, in the perspective of the formal rulers or dominant groups within the state, the problem of securing obedience, loyalty and cooperation of the masses as

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<sup>92</sup> *Op. cit.*, p12.

<sup>93</sup> *Op. cit.*, p13.

<sup>94</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp264 and 269 and Özkirimli, p117.

<sup>95</sup> *Invention*, p264.

<sup>96</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp264-5.

well as cementing their own legitimacy in the public mind became urgent. The older devices for maintaining social subordination, whereby relatively autonomous corporations under the monarch had controlled their own members in pyramids of authority linked to higher authorities at their apexes were no longer effective, the stratified social hierarchies in which each stratum did not get ideas above its station were crumbling. Even if only in the form of elections, the people's desire to engage in politics could no longer be ignored as it now had institutional anchorage.<sup>97</sup> Thus the beleaguered power-holders "rediscovered the importance of 'irrational' elements in the maintenance of the social fabric and the social order".<sup>98</sup> Taking France as an example, Hobsbawm isolates three innovations in the invention of tradition as particularly significant. The first was primary education, "imbued with revolutionary and republican principles and content, and conducted by the secular equivalent of the priesthood".<sup>99</sup> The second was the invention of public ceremonies (of which Bastille Day was the most striking exemplar) with the mass production of public monuments as the third.<sup>100</sup>

The result of these efforts was that "nationalism became a substitute for social cohesion through a national church, a royal family or other cohesive traditions, or collective group self-presentations, a new secular religion, and that the class which required such a mode of cohesion most was the growing new middle class, or rather that large intermediate mass which so signally lacked other forms of cohesion".<sup>101</sup> Consequently, in Hobsbawm's words: "just because so much of what subjectively makes up the modern 'nation' consists of such constructs and is associated with appropriate and, in general, fairly recent symbols or suitably tailored discourse (such as 'national history'), the national phenomenon cannot be adequately investigated without careful attention to the 'invention of tradition'".<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> *Invention*, p265.

<sup>98</sup> *Op. cit.*, p268.

<sup>99</sup> *Op. cit.*, p271.

<sup>100</sup> As above. On public monuments, see also p264. For a comparison with Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm II, see pp273-9.

<sup>101</sup> *Invention*, p303. On the nature of the middle classes and the specific problems they faced due to the fluidity of membership, see p291.

<sup>102</sup> *Invention*, p14.

Like Gellner, Hobsbawm shows no great interest in national identity, but is more overtly hostile towards nationalism as an ideology.<sup>103</sup> He virtually quarantines nationalism, denying it any trace of rationality, restricting it to the gullible or the unscrupulous cliques of the socially dominant, desperate to retain their power and privileges intact.<sup>104</sup> I, by contrast, agree with Michael Billig that nationalism has become the normal condition of existence, the background assumption (or principle of classification) upon which society rests, its source of cohesion, the framework of everyday being. Regardless of the irrational responses that it is capable of provoking, it therefore fulfils a rational purpose of cosmos-building in the modern environment.

### Benedict Anderson

Benedict Anderson, in his original and stimulating *Imagined Communities*,<sup>105</sup> looks upon nationality and nationalism as “cultural artefacts of a particular kind”.<sup>106</sup> In order to understand them, it is necessary to observe how they have come into historical being, how their meanings have changed over time and why they command such profound emotional legitimacy. For him, the nation is “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”.<sup>107</sup> It is imagined “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives

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<sup>103</sup> For other critiques of Hobsbawm, see Özkirimli, pp120-7; Smith's *Nationalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001, henceforth *Smith Nationalism*, pp89-93, his *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1995, (henceforth *Global*), pp8-11, pp12-13 of his contribution to Guibernau and Hutchinson, *op. cit.*, pp9-31 entitled *Nations and History*, *Smith 1998*, pp117-131 and *Myths*, pp42-3 and 204-5.

<sup>104</sup> On *Invention*, pp263-4 he makes a slight concession: “conscious invention succeeded mainly in proportion to its success in broadcasting on a wavelength to which the public was ready to tune in. Official new public holidays, ceremonies, heroes or symbols, which commanded the growing armies of the state's employees and the growing captive public of schoolchildren, might still fail to mobilize the citizen volunteers if they lacked genuine popular resonance”.

<sup>105</sup> Second edition, Verso, London, 1991 (original edition 1983), henceforth *Imagined*.

<sup>106</sup> *Imagined*, p4.

<sup>107</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6. Cf. Hans Kohn's formulation in *The Idea of Nationalism, A Study in its Origins and Background*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1961 (originally 1944, henceforth *Idea*): “Nationality is formed by the decision to form a nationality” (p15).

the image of their communion".<sup>108</sup> Anderson points out that Gellner had made use of the verb "to invent" in *Thought and Change*, which contained the first major statement of his theory of nationalism,<sup>109</sup> but objects to it since "Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates "invention" to "fabrication" and "falsity", rather than to "imagining" and "creation". In this way he implies that "true" communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations".<sup>110</sup> In reality all communities larger than primordial villages are imagined and what distinguishes them from one another is not whether they are genuine or false, but the style in which they are imagined. Returning to his definition, the nation is imagined as limited because even the largest has finite boundaries, beyond which other nations lie and as sovereign because the concept first saw the light of day in an age in which Enlightenment and revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic dominions and reached maturity when even the most devout adherents of universal religion were forced to acknowledge the pluralism of such faiths, that each was confined territorially, so that the dream of the nation became that of freedom directly under God, the emblem of such liberty being the sovereign state. Finally, it is imagined as a community because: "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship".<sup>111</sup> This fraternity has elicited willingness to make enormous sacrifices, including laying down one's life for the nation's sake.

In its preoccupation with death and immortality, nationalism betrays a strong affinity with religion. Religious thought has tried to answer the questions surrounding life's contingency and to transform fatality into continuity, concerning itself with the links between the dead and the yet unborn. In Western Europe the eighteenth century marks the dawn of nationalism and the dusk of religious modes of thought. Suffering did not disappear, yet rationalist secularism brought no comfort for it. Death appeared more arbitrary than ever before and salvation absurd. Nationalism jumped

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<sup>108</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6. Cf. again Kohn *Idea*, where he denies that nationalism in the sense of solidarity or identification with "the life and aspirations of uncounted millions we shall never know, with a territory which we shall never visit in its entirety" can be deemed the same as love of home and family (pp8-9).

<sup>109</sup> Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1964, pp147-178.

<sup>110</sup> *Imagined*, p6.

<sup>111</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

into the breach: "If nation-states are widely conceded to be "new" and "historical", the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still more important, glide into a limitless future. It is the magic of nationalism to turn chance into destiny".<sup>112</sup> In other words, nationalism has to be comprehended by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it. Two of the latter, which are of particular relevance, are the religious community and the dynastic realm.

The great sacral cultures incorporated conceptions of immense communities, imaginable through the medium of a sacred language and written script. Even though these languages made it possible to entertain the idea of, for example, Christendom, the scope and plausibility of these communities cannot be explained by them alone, since their readers were tiny literate reefs on top of vast illiterate oceans. The relationship between the literati and their societies furnishes the vital clue: they were adepts in a cosmological hierarchy of which the apex was divine. By mediating between vernacular and Latin, the bilingual clerisy actually mediated between earth and heaven. However, their unselfconscious coherence waned steadily after the late Middle Ages due to the impact of explorations in the non-European world, which not only widened the cultural and geographic horizon, but also conceptions of possible forms of human life, unleashing the corrosive effects of relativisation, and of a gradual demotion of the sacred language itself, with Latin's fall from grace exemplifying a larger process in which the sacred communities were fragmented, pluralized and territorialized.<sup>113</sup>

As far as the second system was concerned, kingship organizes everything around a high centre, its legitimacy deriving from divinity, not populations, who are subjects, not citizens. Borders were porous and indistinct and sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another. After the French Revolution, however, the dynasties had to go on the defensive and "monarchy" became a semi-standardized model.<sup>114</sup>

Beneath the ebbing of the sacred communities and lineages a fundamental change in modes of apprehending the world was taking place. The medieval Christian mind did not perceive history as an endless chain of cause and effect or of radical separations

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<sup>112</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp11-12.

<sup>113</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp12-19.

<sup>114</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp19-22.

between past and present. Instead events were joined together through divine providence, the here and now not a mere link in an earthly chain of occurrences, but simultaneously something, which has always been and will be fulfilled in the future. Borrowing from Walter Benjamin, Anderson explains that what has taken the place of “simultaneity-along-time” is “homogenous empty time”, in which “simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar”.<sup>115</sup> The importance of this transformation for the birth of the nation is revealed by examining the basic structure of two forms of imagining, which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper. They provided the technical means for “re-presenting” the kind of imagined community that is the nation.

In their plots, novels connect protagonists by embedding them in social settings (geographically designated). The societies in which they interact are sociological entities of such firm and stable reality that their members can pass each other on the street without ever becoming acquainted and still share a connection. The characters are, furthermore, linked in the minds of the omniscient readers who watch them going about their daily business all at once. Anderson’s conclusion: “That all these acts are performed at the same, clocked, calendrical time, but by actors who may be largely unaware of one another, shows the novelty of this imagined world conjured up by the author in his readers’ minds”.<sup>116</sup> This idea of a sociological organism moving calendrically through empty, homogenous time is a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which is also apprehended as a solid community moving steadily down history.

Similarly, newspapers, which contain a bewildering collection of reported stories, all happening independently without the participants in the individual dramas being remotely aware of each other, follow literary conventions. The arbitrariness of the inclusion and juxtaposition of the material is enough to demonstrate that the linkage between news items is imagined. It is achieved firstly by simple calendrical coincidence, the date at the top of each page denoting the unifying factor, the passage of time, during which the world ambles ahead. The second source of linkage is to be found in the relationship between the newspaper, as a type of book, and the market.

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<sup>115</sup> *Imagined*, p24. The Benjamin passage is taken from *Illuminations*, Fontana, London, 1973, p263.

<sup>116</sup> *Op. cit.*, p26.

The book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity. In this perspective, the newspaper is comparable to a book sold in colossal print-runs, but of ephemeral popularity, “one-day best-sellers”.<sup>117</sup> It creates the mass ceremony of almost exactly simultaneous consumption of the “newspaper-as-fiction”, with morning and evening editions devoured between certain hours of the day.<sup>118</sup> Although it is performed privately, each communicant knows that what he is doing is being replicated at the same moment by millions of others “of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion”.<sup>119</sup> The newspaper reader, seeing copies of the same product in the hands of neighbours and fellow commuters, is reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life.<sup>120</sup>

Print knowledge thrived on reproducibility and dissemination. The initial market for books was a wide, but thin stratum of (bilingual) Latin readers across Europe. Once it was saturated, the monoglot masses beckoned. A shortage of money made publishing entrepreneurs think seriously about peddling cheap editions in the vernaculars. Three factors allowed these considerations to gather further momentum. The first was a change in the character of Latin itself. The Humanists had revived the literature of pagan antiquity, widening an appreciation of the ancients’ sophisticated achievements in style. The Latin the intelligentsia aspired to write became even further removed from ecclesiastical life, lending it an esoteric quality different from that of church Latin in mediaeval times, which had been arcane because of its status as text. Now it became arcane because of what was written as well.

The second was the impact of the Reformation, which owed much of its success to “print-capitalism” itself. The coalition between Protestantism and print-capitalism quickly created large new reading publics and mobilized them for politico-religious purposes.<sup>121</sup>

The third was “the slow, geographically uneven, spread of particular vernaculars as instruments of administrative centralization by certain well-positioned would-be

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<sup>117</sup> *Op. cit.*, p35.

<sup>118</sup> *Op. cit.*, p35.

<sup>119</sup> As above.

<sup>120</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp35-6.

<sup>121</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp37-40.

absolutist monarchs”.<sup>122</sup> The “choice” of language was a pragmatic and haphazard development dictated by the inner convenience of officialdoms.<sup>123</sup>

The cumulative outcome was the “dethronement of Latin”.<sup>124</sup>

Capitalism “assembled” (within the limits imposed by grammars and syntaxes) related vernaculars into mechanically reproduced print-languages capable of being sold throughout the market. These print-languages laid the foundations of national consciousnesses in three ways: by creating unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken regional variants, by imparting a new fixity to language, which in the long term helped to build the image of being ancient so central to the idea of the nation, and by begetting languages-of-power different from the older administrative vernaculars in that certain dialects were inevitably closer to each print-language and dominated their final forms.<sup>125</sup> Anderson is careful to stress that in their origins, the fixing of print-languages and the differentiation of status between them were accidental, the result of the explosive interaction between capitalism, technology and human linguistic diversity. Once in place, however, they could become formal models to be imitated or indeed deliberately exploited.<sup>126</sup>

Anderson draws inspiration from both Durkheim and the social constructionist school of thought as pioneered by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality*,<sup>127</sup> paving the way for the study of representations and the

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<sup>122</sup> *Op. cit.*, p40.

<sup>123</sup> *Op. cit.*, p42.

<sup>124</sup> As above.

<sup>125</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp44-5.

<sup>126</sup> *Op. cit.*, p45.

<sup>127</sup> Penguin, London, 1991 (original publication 1966), henceforth *Construction*. For a discussion of social constructionism, see Chapter One below. Durkheim was the father of the theory of collective representations, as set out in his *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, The Free Press, New York, 1995, original date of publication 1912 (henceforth *Elementary*). The concept of imagined community first appears on p42, where he states: “A Church is not simply a priestly brotherhood; it is a moral community made up of the faithful, both laity and priests”. The theme is developed throughout his examination of totemism (especially on pp149-150, 190-3 and 221-231 and see also p425). On the issue of Durkheim’s influence on Anderson, see Karen Fields’ introduction to *Elementary*, pxxxiii. For critiques of Anderson, see Özkirimli, pp151-6; Michael Billig in *Banal Nationalism*, Sage, London,



psychological dimension of nationalism. As John Breuilly judiciously remarks in his assessment of Anderson's contribution, the argument on the literary genres of newspaper and popular novel, with the sense of oneness between author and audience shows that "a culture comes to be constructed through representation".<sup>128</sup>

### John Breuilly

In his *Nationalism and the State*,<sup>129</sup> John Breuilly regards nationalism as "an especially appropriate form of political behaviour in the context of the modern state and the modern state system,"<sup>130</sup> more specifically as referring to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments,"<sup>131</sup> dismissing the assumptions that it is either a search for a national identity or an expression of class interest, social structure or a cultural formation.<sup>132</sup> Ultimately it boils down to politics and power, the latter centering upon control of the state. Until the relationship between nationalism, politics and power has been grasped, considerations such as culture, ideology and class only muddy the waters. Methodologically, Breuilly is sceptical of the utility of coming up with a general theory, which is subsequently applied to cases, preferring to develop a typology of nationalism first: "The internal variations within nationalism are too great to allow of a single method of investigation and so one must begin by identifying

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1995 (henceforth *Billig*), pp24, 70 and 125; *Breuilly 1996a*, pp145-153; *Smith 1998*, pp131-142; *Smith Nationalism*, pp78-80; Gopal Balakrishnan, *The National Imagination*, in *Balakrishnan*, pp198-213; *Breuilly 1996*, pp159-161 and *Breuilly 1996a*, pp145-153.

<sup>128</sup> *Breuilly 1996a*, p146.

<sup>129</sup> For bibliographical details, see footnote 50 above.

<sup>130</sup> *Breuilly 1993*, p1.

<sup>131</sup> *Op. cit.*, p2. On the same page he defines a "nationalist argument" as "a political doctrine based on three basic assertions", that such a thing as a nation with an explicit character exists, that the interests and values of the nation take precedence over all other interests and values and that the nation must be as independent as possible, which is usually understood as attaining political sovereignty.

<sup>132</sup> He summarises this stance with the utmost clarity in his essay *The State and Nationalism*, in Montserrat Guibernau and John Hutchinson (editors): *Understanding Nationalism*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001, pp32-52, henceforth *Breuilly 2001*, p32: „I do not regard the nation as having a significant pre-modern history, or as a „real“ group with an identity and consciousness which produces political effects such as nation-states, or as a discursive construct. Rather I treat the nation as a modern political and ideological formation which developed in close conjunction with the emergence of the modern, territorial, sovereign and participatory state“.

various types of nationalism which can be considered separately. After such a consideration one can seek to locate underlying similarities between those types. Second, each type must be investigated by the comparative historical method. Within each type I select a few cases. I analyse these cases using the same methods and concepts, which also enables me to compare and contrast them systematically. Only in this way can one move on to draw general conclusions from the case studies.”<sup>133</sup> In so doing, he prefers to concentrate on what he calls significant nationalist movements, those which posed a serious challenge to the state.<sup>134</sup> A nationalist opposition can aim to break away from the present state, in which case he classifies it as separation nationalism, to reform the state in a nationalist direction (reform nationalism), or to unite it with other states (unification nationalism). These categories are further broken down according to whether the movements are opposed to nation or non-nation states.<sup>135</sup> Within these movements, nationalist ideas can perform three functions: coordination (where they are used to persuade elites, which would otherwise pursue separate interests in challenging the existing state, that they have a common cause), mobilisation (where they drum up support for the political movement amongst groups previously excluded from the political process) and legitimacy (where they justify the goals of the movement both to the state it seeks to usurp and to external agents, such as foreign powers and their public opinions).<sup>136</sup> Breuilly draws attention to the different meanings attached to the term nationalism within the broad theoretical debate, with three particular areas of interest emerging, namely doctrine, politics and sentiment.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, multiple approaches to the problem are possible, such as the primordial (adopted by the nationalists themselves), functional (psychological, Marxist and so on), narrative (when historians recount the story of the rise of nationalism, thereby taking it for granted) and modernist.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Breuilly 1993, p2.

<sup>134</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp7-8.

<sup>135</sup> *Op. cit.*, p9. For a brief outline of each, see Breuilly 2001, pp39-42.

<sup>136</sup> Breuilly 1996, pp166-7, cf. Breuilly 1993, p93.

<sup>137</sup> See Breuilly 1996, which contains the most accessible and systematic statement of his position in general. The advantages and disadvantages of focusing on each of the areas of interest are discussed on pp146-149.

<sup>138</sup> The primordialist position is dealt with in detail in Breuilly 1996, pp149-154 and in Breuilly 1993 on pp405-6; the functional in Breuilly 1996, pp154-156 and in Breuilly 1993, pp407-414 (Marxist) and

Within the latter, emphasis can be placed on the transformation of consciousness and the production and reception of nationalist ideas (Benedict Anderson, Miroslav Hroch), social transformations (Gellner) or Breuilly's preferred option, transformations in the nature of power.<sup>139</sup> Political action imposes discipline on ideas, steering them in the direction of practical goals as well as channelling diffuse emotions. By asking the simple question about how much support such political movements are able to tap within their society and how powerful they are, the significance of ideas and sentiments can be gauged.<sup>140</sup>

The next step is to relate nationalism to the process of modernisation, which for Breuilly involves a fundamental change in the generic division of labour.<sup>141</sup> This meant that the broadest categories of human activity, coercion (power), cognition (culture) and production (the economy) were redefined and placed in a different relationship to one another. In Europe, a transition occurred from a corporate to a functional division of labour, the former found in a society where "a bundle of different functions are carried out by particular institutions, usually on behalf of some distinct group".<sup>142</sup> By way of illustration, Breuilly cites the ideal-typical guild, which performs the economic functions of regulating production and distribution of particular goods and services, the cultural functions of taking care of the vocational education of apprentices, organising the recreational and ceremonial activities of members and enforcing religious observance as well as the political functions of running courts to punish wayward members and, finally, participation in town governments. Churches, lordships, peasant communes and the monarch in his capacity as privileged landowner exhibited similar polyvalence. By the late eighteenth century this division of labour had been undermined by sustained attacks from various quarters, which envisaged an alternative "whereby each of the major

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pp414-418 (psychological). In the earlier work, he assessed the Marxist and psychological independently of the functionalist analysis (pp418-420) and included a section on the communications approach (pp406-7).

<sup>139</sup> See Breuilly 1996, pp158-162.

<sup>140</sup> *Op. cit.*, p163.

<sup>141</sup> The argument is taken from Gellner, *Plough, Sword and Book*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, pp20-22.

<sup>142</sup> Breuilly 1996, p163.

social functions was concentrated into particular institutions".<sup>143</sup> The disentanglement advocated by the critics eventually carried the day, superseding the older arrangements.

The link with nationalist politics is provided by the development of the modern state, one aspect of the wider processes.<sup>144</sup> Breuilly takes pains to ensure that neither modernisation itself nor the state is viewed as the "cause" of nationalism. More accurately: "The formation of the specialized, sovereign, territorial, public state is the institutional context within which the idea of nationalism appears appropriate as ideology, both in intellectual terms and as a way of mobilizing support. Political modernization relates to other features of modernization – the free market economy, the autonomous world of culture, the domestication of family life, and so on – all of which have a bearing on nationalism but only once its political specificity is grasped".<sup>145</sup>

The state assumed a liberal form, which entailed a pooling of "public" powers into state institutions such as parliaments and bureaucracies, leaving many "private" powers under the control of non-political institutions. This in turn brought about a double transformation of government with "public" institutions losing "private" powers and vice versa.<sup>146</sup> Thus a distinct idea of the state as "public" and civil society as "private" was elaborated. Within both there was a new emphasis upon

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<sup>143</sup> *Op. cit.*, p164.

<sup>144</sup> On p369 of *Breuilly 1993*, he once again makes effective use of an ideal-type: „The modern state is the possessor of sovereignty over a given territory. Sovereignty resides in a specific institution such as monarchy or parliament, and is considered to be, by its very nature, indivisible. The state possesses an elaborate institutional structure which delimits, justifies and exercises the claim to sovereignty. The activity of the state is devoted to the maintenance and exercise of its sovereignty against both external and internal threats. Externally the limit upon sovereignty is set by the sovereignty of other states. The political world is made up of a plurality of sovereign territorial states. It has no order other than that created out of the rational pursuit of self-interest which states follow in their dealings with one another. Internally the sovereignty of the state is limited – or, more precisely, divided – by the distinction between the public and the private spheres. In the public sphere the state exercises sovereignty directly; in the private sphere it does no more than provide ground rules for dealings between individuals and groups, rules which can, if necessary, be enforced when broken". For modernization as a whole, see *Breuilly 2001*, pp36-38.

<sup>145</sup> *Breuilly 2001*, p51.

<sup>146</sup> The examples given are the monarchy on the one hand losing "private" powers, such as the right to grant monopolies, and the churches and guilds losing "public" powers to government.

people as individuals as a result of the breakdown of corporate ties. Hence the main problem in establishing political order came to be that of making the state-society connection, in other words how to reconcile the public interests of citizens with the private interests of selfish individuals. The built-in competitive edge of nationalist ideas was that they were compatible with both attempts at finding a response: one based on citizenship, the other based on culture.<sup>147</sup>

The first solution recast society as a polity of citizens, generating a sense of commitment to the state through taking part in democratic institutions, the “nation” being no more than the body of citizens, whilst the second stressed its collective character with nationalism providing a sense of identity in place of the criteria of privilege employed in a corporate society.<sup>148</sup>

Liberalism lost ground to nationalism because it experienced difficulties in coming to terms with the idea of community interests, which should be accorded political recognition. In addition, many sections of the population had an aversion to liberalism, especially where formal participation rights masked real, socially structured inequality. Furthermore, nationalism was more than capable of rising to the challenge of appealing to a wide range of groups inhabiting a given territory. Although the two concepts of nation as a body of citizens and as a cultural collectivity conflicted logically, nationalism pulled off a sleight of hand that bound them together.<sup>149</sup>

### 1.3 The Ethno-Symbolists

#### John Armstrong

John Armstrong, in *Nations before Nationalism*,<sup>150</sup> seeks to unearth the ethnic roots of “the intense group identification”, which goes by the name of nation.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Breuilly 1996, p165. Cf. The concluding remarks in Breuilly 1993, p390.

<sup>148</sup> Breuilly 1996, p165.

<sup>149</sup> *Op. cit.*, p166. For a more extensive account of the intellectual sources of nationalist ideology, see Breuilly 1993, pp55-64, which is particularly illuminating on historicism, authenticity and the contrast between the natural and the unnatural. On Breuilly, see Özkirimli, pp104-109 and 120-125; for critiques, see *Global*, pp55-6 and 75-8 and Smith 1998, pp84-94, 196-7 and 234.

<sup>150</sup> The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1982, henceforth *Armstrong*. According to Özkirimli, A.D. Smith and others have regarded him as either a primordialist or a perennialist. I agree

Advocating study of ethnic relations over extended historical periods, he believes that his comparative approach is suited to the discovery of patterns or typologies rather than general laws. His task is that of condensing the experiences of ethnic identification to shorthand description that will subsequently allow specific questions about analogous phenomena to be asked. In so doing, he provides an impressive and highly detailed overview of Eastern and Western Christendom and Islamic civilisation. Since the late eighteenth century, nationalism has been elevated to the dominant political doctrine: "The right of individuals to choose the state to which they belong, that is, to establish territorial political structures corresponding to their consciousness of group identity, has constituted a principle theme of political analysis. My examination, however, stops at the threshold of nationalism, before the period (...) when consciousness of ethnic identity became a predominant force for constituting independent political structures. A major objective of my work is, indeed, to provide a perspective in which such historically novel demands posed by nationalist movements must confront a lengthy record of human association in which persistent group identity did not ordinarily constitute the overriding legitimization of polity formation".<sup>152</sup>

A time dimension encompassing many centuries, similar to the *longue durée* of the *Annales* school of French historiography, is essential for disentangling independent ethnic experiences from the effects of diffusion and mimesis as well as for perceiving modern nationalism as part of a cycle of ethnic consciousness. The epoch of Absolutism was one in which elites rejected ethnic differentiation. As it immediately preceded nationalism, it created the impression that the ideological newcomer was entirely without precedent. However, a longer look suggests the recurrence of such widespread ethnic identifications, though in other forms. Absolutist Enlightenment brought the revived linguistic awareness stimulated by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation conflicts to a wider audience, one of the results being "that modern nationalist thought, succeeding to an age of cosmopolitanism, has sought permanent

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with Özkirimli's assessment to the effect that: "it can be asserted that the arguments put forward in this study, particularly Armstrong's overall perspective, have laid the groundwork for ethno-symbolism" (Özkirimli, p170). Therefore I feel that it is appropriate to examine Armstrong's ideas immediately prior to Smith's.

<sup>151</sup> Armstrong, p3.

<sup>152</sup> Armstrong, p4.

“essences” of national character instead of recognising the fundamental but shifting significance of boundaries for human identity”.<sup>153</sup>

By emphasising the latter, Armstrong follows the Norwegian anthropologist Frederik Barth,<sup>154</sup> who proposes a social interaction model of ethnic identity that does not posit a fixed “character” or “essence” for the group, but instead concentrates on the perceptions of its members, which distinguish them from other groups. Indeed: “groups tend to define themselves not by reference to their own characteristics, but by exclusion”.<sup>155</sup> The advantages of addressing attitudinal boundary mechanisms are to be found in the insights that both the cultural and biological content of the group can alter as long as the boundary mechanisms are maintained, that, although these boundaries may have geographical counterparts, ethnic groups are not necessarily based on the occupation of exclusive territories and that other ethnic features, such as the use of languages as alternative codes rather than as ethnic identifying symbols or prescriptive communication media, are relevant.<sup>156</sup>

The implication of the concept is that “ethnicity is a bundle of shifting interactions rather than a nuclear component of social organisation”.<sup>157</sup> It is part of a continuum of social collectivities including classes and religious bodies. Over a long period of time each may transmute into one of the others. Consequently, Armstrong is more interested in the interplay between class, ethnic and religious characteristics than in “compartmentalising definitions”.<sup>158</sup> Nevertheless there are tendencies, which allow the observer to tease them apart. Where ethnicity and religion have coincided, groups cultivate peculiar linguistic features associated with sacral identity. They favour endogamy and symbolic border guards such as architecture, dress and manners. The

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<sup>153</sup> As above. Armstrong is rigorous in his use of terminology, refusing to treat “boundary” and “frontier” as synonyms. Throughout “the term “boundaries” will be reserved for all relevant informal limits resulting from social processes such as linguistic, folkloric, and economic development, whereas “frontier” will denote borders defined by political action, including the formal action of autonomous ecclesiastical authorities” (pp9-10).

<sup>154</sup> In Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, Bergen, Universitetsforlaget, 1969. For a summary of Barth’s work on ethnicity, see Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity*, Routledge, London, 1996 (henceforth *Jenkins*), pp90-103.

<sup>155</sup> *Armstrong*, p5.

<sup>156</sup> *Armstrong*, pp4-5.

<sup>157</sup> *Armstrong*, p6.

<sup>158</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6.

dividing lines between class and ethnicity are sharper. In the pre-modern era, functional or occupational differentiation from neighbouring social or ethnic groups was a prime distinguishing trait both of traditional diasporas and nomads. Generally, however, a lower class cannot constitute a group as consistently conscious of its identity as an ethnic collectivity, since its incomplete occupational pyramid does not yield an elite with the communications and bargaining skills needed to legitimise the boundary mechanisms of the class within the larger polity. An underclass is therefore also vulnerable to manipulation by the elites that act as guardians of the myths and symbols common to the society as a whole. That being said: "the presence of very different linguistic patterns among peasants and elites, as contrasted to minor dialect differentiation, made maintenance of a latent but persistently strong identity easier".<sup>159</sup>

Where a counter-elite has developed within the incipient ethnic collectivity, however, it can try to enter into an exchange relationship with the dominant elite. The very potential for such a relationship can represent a criterion for separating ethnicity from class. Even without an autonomous political structure, ethnic identification is possible.<sup>160</sup>

In their origins and their most fundamental effects, ethnic boundary mechanisms exist in the minds of their subjects rather than as lines on a map or norms in a rule book. Words operate as symbolic boundary markers, warning a group member when he is nearing a barrier between his collectivity and another. The cues conveyed by symbols are signals from one ethnic group to another or among members of the same group, which means that symbolic interaction can be considered as a type of communication. Since symbols are established as content generations before they are transmitted in their capacity as cues to any given members of a group, ethnic symbolic communication by definition takes place over the *longue durée*, between the dead and the living. The persistence of the symbol lies at the heart of its significance and is closely related to its incorporation within a mythic structure.<sup>161</sup>

Again over long periods of time, the legitimising power of individual mythic structures is enhanced by fusion with other myths in a *mythomoteur*, which defines

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<sup>159</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

<sup>160</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

<sup>161</sup> *Armstrong*, pp7-8.



identity in relation to a specific polity. Demonstrable historical validity is not the critical point here. Instead, the effect of the myth recital in arousing heightened awareness among group members of their “common fate” and thereby reinforcing the salience of boundaries is vital. Armstrong concludes: “it is the symbolic rather than the material aspects of common fate that are decisive for identity. Moreover, symbols need not directly reflect the “objectively” most important elements of the material way of life even when it does constitute a sharply differentiating underlying factor”.<sup>162</sup> Armstrong embarks on his analysis by contrasting two fundamentally different ways of life, the nomadic and the sedentary, not because they embody ethnic identities, but because the myths and symbols accruing to them divide nearly all subsequent identities into two groups based on incompatible principles.<sup>163</sup>

Nostalgia, the expression of the respective myth-symbol architectures, is described by Armstrong as “a persistent image of a superior way of life in the distant past”.<sup>164</sup> As a social form, it articulates the yearning to return to a golden age, to halcyon days before corruption and equivocation permeated civilised life and is emotionally charged. Through it, earlier life patterns condition the attitudes of later generations by setting conditions in which boundaries are perceived.<sup>165</sup> The territorial principle ultimately triumphed in Europe, whilst the genealogical principle prevailed in most of the Middle East.<sup>166</sup>

The two great universal religions, which came to dominate the Mediterranean world by the early Middle Ages, Islam and Christianity, each propagated their own legitimising myths. As these developed, the respective identity components derived from the two ways of life interacted with doctrinal cleavages to produce two strongly opposed identities. Their common origins as well as their geographical proximity made the religions the negative reference points for one another, so that they

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<sup>162</sup> *Op. cit.*, p9.

<sup>163</sup> *Op. cit.*, p12. Armstrong summarises the difference as between dreaming of vast, open spaces and of the security and tranquillity of a little plot of earth (p19).

<sup>164</sup> *Op. cit.*, p16.

<sup>165</sup> As above.

<sup>166</sup> *Armstrong*, p12. For the details of the respective developments, see pp19-27 for the transition from sedentary to territorial, with a subsection on *Stamm* and tribe on pp27-37, and pp38-46 on the nomadic experience. In Europe, ancient polities and ecclesiastical organizations based on settled agricultural populations consolidated territorial attachment by precisely delimiting jurisdictions (pp51-2).

resembled on a grand scale ethnic groups that define themselves in relation to out-groups. All Moslems thought of themselves as united at least in contrast to neighbouring Christians and vice versa. Hence each perpetuated and redefined the other's identity in a "superethnic" manner. Violent conflict further consolidated these attitudes in a spiral of mutual antagonism. Intrusions by steppe nomads and Christian reprisals led to the coming into being of a "broad frontier zone of insecurity" between the two civilisations.<sup>167</sup> Moreover, the concept of defending this frontier became the source of constitutive myths for polities on both sides, as mirrored in the terms *ghazi* (Islamic) and *Antemurale* (Christian).

Armstrong then delves into the role of the city. Citizenship began with the experience of intimate involvement in the affairs of a small political entity. Its effect can scarcely be over-exaggerated: "The intense identity this participation fostered became, after many vicissitudes, the basis for many if not most broader identities".<sup>168</sup> In order to appreciate fully the impact of towns, a range of factors, from architecture to legal codes, has to be taken into account.<sup>169</sup> In moving from this level of identification to that of the imperial polity, the central question is: "how could the intense consciousness of loyalty and identity established through face-to-face contact in the city-state be transferred to the larger agglomerations of cities and countryside known as empires?"<sup>170</sup> The answer lies at least in part in the ancient Mesopotamian myth of the universal terrestrial empire reflecting the order of heaven, which was used as a vehicle for incorporating city-state loyalties into a larger framework.<sup>171</sup> Bureaucracies

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<sup>167</sup> *Armstrong*, p91. For the section as a whole, pp90-92.

<sup>168</sup> *Op. cit.*, p93. Indeed, on p95 Armstrong puts forward the city as a third way of life, „as ineradicable and permeating as nomadism or sedentarism". The difference between the Moslem and the Christian relationship to the city is examined on p94.

<sup>169</sup> *Armstrong*, p13. On architecture, see pp96-102; on Italian and Mediterranean cities, see pp102-6; on Northern European cities and Magdeburg and Lübeck Law, see pp106-113 and on urbanism in the „shatter zone" (p91, East Central Europe along the Habsburg-Ottoman frontier) see pp113-122. Armstrong sketches eight city types on the basis of combining three criteria for classifying the influence of cities in general on ethnicity (pp127-8).

<sup>170</sup> *Armstrong*, p13. Cf. *Özirimli*, pp172-3.

<sup>171</sup> *Armstrong*, p13, although, as he makes clear on p165, the model was being emulated unconsciously. For details of the Mesopotamian myth, see p132; on Byzantium, see pp145-151; on the myth of Empire in Western Europe, see pp152-154 (which Armstrong summarises as follows on p152: „the ideal solution was a universal secular empire protecting a universal spiritual domain and in tutelage to the

with their hierarchical structure and post-recruitment socialization processes together with the establishment of capitals furnished the institutional complement for building up central power.<sup>172</sup>

Language is the final issue, which Armstrong treats in depth and which he had deliberately downplayed earlier “in order to emphasize that early ethnic alignments could arise without much attention to linguistic affiliations”.<sup>173</sup> In pre-modern times, communication at the mass level over long distances was usually too slight to make language crucial for the average person. Obstructions to communication between the major language families are such that awareness of linguistic difference has always been present, though not necessarily salient in people’s consciousness. As an offshoot of compact territorial settlement, the boundary between the Romance and Germanic language groups has been a fixed geographical line since the early medieval period. This language boundary rarely coincided with political frontiers, however.

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latter. In practice, the balance between secular and ecclesiastical forces permitted the emergence of a Western polity separate from both church and empire, followed by an entire series of competing polities that became the European state system. In the West, moreover, an emperor, unless endowed with great charisma, was restricted by material limitations, legal traditions, and ecclesiastical power to an extent rarely encountered in other imperial polities”) and on the French exception, see pp154-9. For a useful summary of his findings in the chapter, see pp164-7.

<sup>172</sup> *Armstrong*, pp 13 and 197. On pp199-200, Armstrong compresses the results of his extensive historical investigations into a typology of imperial polities. He concedes that „the Christian ecclesiastical network constituted a far more effective penetrative organization than did the administrations of large pre-modern polities” (p202). Indeed, he devotes an entire chapter to religious organizations and ethnic identity, covering diasporas (pp206-213), the rift between the Eastern and Western churches (pp213-222), triangular ecclesiastical rivalry in East Central Europe (pp222-230, where Catholic, Orthodox and the German missions sponsored by the Holy Roman Emperors competed) and the Protestant Reformation versus the Catholic Counter-Reformation (pp230-233). The principle conclusion for our purposes is that religious organizations „greatly stimulate the use and written codification of popular languages, especially during periods of intense sectarian controversy” (p238).

<sup>173</sup> *Armstrong*, p241. Having dealt with the Islamic world (pp242-250), he examines European linguistic barriers, turning first to the Germanic-Romance (pp250-257) and the Germanic-Slavic cases (pp258-261) before focusing on „the lack of perceptible dividing lines among transitional dialects of the same language family”, which „did not necessarily constitute latent factors available for identity mobilization, although specific historical circumstances might make particular dialects available for such manipulation” (p261). He illustrates this proposition by looking at the Romance (pp261-272) and Slavic (pp272-279) groups.

Only when speakers of the two language families were intermingled on the same territory, with speakers of one revelling in higher social status, did language difference cause political cleavage. Even in East Central Europe, where such intermixing was more commonplace, language divisions did not function as the chief locus of ethnic identity until the modern period.<sup>174</sup>

Within the regions occupied by the Romance, Germanic and Slavic families respectively, local *patois* blurred imperceptibly into each other. Consequently, the ordinary traveller experienced linguistic changes as the accumulation of minor variations, none of which was pivotal in itself. As long as neither legal precision nor literary elegance was called for, individuals could communicate throughout extensive territories. From this, Armstrong arrives at the conclusion that “the significance of language for ethnic identity is highly contingent”, with politics and religion exerting a decisive influence over the elaboration and subsequent careers of linguistic codes.<sup>175</sup>

In *Towards a Theory of Nationalism: Consensus and Dissensus*,<sup>176</sup> Armstrong retreats from his earlier stances, albeit only slightly, on the insurmountability of obstacles in the path of a general theory (referring to his appraisal as “somewhat too pessimistic”) and on the nature of the nation.<sup>177</sup> National identity as a primordial phenomenon has been thrown out by members of the academic community, although they are willing to accept that it coalesced at a specific point, however remote, in history: “Nationalism – the conscious demand for political expression of the nation – originated, on the other hand, no earlier than the fifteenth century”.<sup>178</sup> Liah Greenfeld dates its emergence to sixteenth-century England, whilst impressive French works place it slightly before then.<sup>179</sup> Nonetheless, “the notion that nations, or even “ethnic groups”, have existed forever is scarcely tenable among scholars”.<sup>180</sup> Reviewing his own contentions concerning the Germanic tribes, he concurs with Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson “that, like other human identities, national identity has been an invention. The

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<sup>174</sup> Armstrong, p281.

<sup>175</sup> *Op. cit.*, p282.

<sup>176</sup> In *Periwal*, pp34-43.

<sup>177</sup> *Periwal*, pp34 and 35.

<sup>178</sup> *Op. cit.*, p35.

<sup>179</sup> Greenfeld, *op. cit.*

<sup>180</sup> *Periwal*, p35.

principle remaining disagreement is over the antiquity of some inventions and the repertory of pre-existing group characteristics that inventors were able to draw on".<sup>181</sup> As Özkirimli comments, he offers no explanation as to why he had undergone this change of heart.<sup>182</sup>

### Anthony D. Smith

Anthony D. Smith, in *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*,<sup>183</sup> *National Identity*,<sup>184</sup> and *Myths and Memories of the Nation*,<sup>185</sup> like Armstrong, throws down the gauntlet to the modernists, tracing the genealogy of nations to well before the outbreak of the French Revolution or the advent of industrialism: "This means (...) grounding our understanding of modern nationalism on an historical base involving considerable time-spans, to see how far its themes and forms were pre-figured in earlier periods and how far a connection with earlier ethnic ties and sentiments can be established".<sup>186</sup> He is quite emphatic in affirming the validity of Armstrong's concentration upon the myth-symbol complex, which dovetails with his own approach.<sup>187</sup> While "objective" considerations, such as population size, economic resources, communications systems and bureaucratic centralization are essential when it comes to creating the environment of states, which then help to mould nations, they tell us little about the qualities and character of the national community itself: "For that we must turn to more "subjective" factors: not the more ephemeral dimensions of collective will, attitude, even sentiment, which make up the day-to-day fabric of ethnic consciousness, but the more permanent cultural attributes of memory, value,

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<sup>181</sup> *Op. cit.*, p36.

<sup>182</sup> Özkirimli, p171. For critiques of ethno-symbolism, see Özkirimli, pp183-9. On Armstrong, see Smith 1998, pp167-8, 181-7 and 196-7 and Kedourie, *op.cit.*, p141.

<sup>183</sup> Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, henceforth *Ethnic*.

<sup>184</sup> Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1991, henceforth *Smith 1991*.

<sup>185</sup> For publication details, see footnote 19, pp13 above.

<sup>186</sup> *Ethnic*, p13.

<sup>187</sup> On p2 of *Ethnic*, Smith writes about Armstrong: "By focusing on these very elements of myth, symbol and memory, he has been able to encompass what has undoubtedly seemed the most perplexing feature of investigation into ethnic and national phenomena: the curiously simultaneous solidity and insubstantiality of ethnic communities and nations". For further endorsements, see pp14-15. Smith also borrows Armstrong's terminology, such as the *mythomoteur* (see pp15-16) and the *longue durée* (*Myths*, p10).

myth and symbolism. For these are often recorded and immortalized in the arts, languages, sciences and laws of the community which, though subject to a slower development, leave their imprint on the perceptions of subsequent generations and shape the structures and atmosphere of the community through the distinctive traditions they deposit".<sup>188</sup> Hence a historical comparison of the "durable constitutive elements", the core of ethnic communities (or *ethnie*, Smith's preferred term) and nations is called for, without falling victim to the perennialist fallacy.<sup>189</sup> He therefore feels entitled to describe his position as "intermediate", falling between perennialism and modernism, reiterating his central argument that "not only did many nations and nationalisms spring up on the basis of pre-existing *ethnie* and their ethnocentrisms, but that in order to forge a "nation" today, it is vital to create and crystallize ethnic components, the lack of which is likely to constitute a serious impediment to 'nation-building'".<sup>190</sup> Although there are a number of cases where very little in the way of *ethnie* raw material can be found this does not invalidate the main contention, as they remain the exception rather than the rule. Usually "some dim memories and elements of culture and alleged ancestry" can be dredged up.<sup>191</sup>

Light can be shed on the origins and development of nations by asking three questions:

- "1. *Who* is the nation? What are the ethnic bases and models of modern nations? Why did these particular nations emerge?
2. *Why* and *how* does the nation emerge? That is, what are the general causes and mechanisms that set in motion the processes of nation-formation from varying ethnic ties and memories?

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<sup>188</sup> *Ethnic*, pp3-4.

<sup>189</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp4 (cited text), 13 and 15. Slightly later, Smith justifies his predilection by stating that "the French term '*ethnie*', which unites an emphasis upon cultural differences with the sense of an historical community. It is this sense of history and the perception of cultural uniqueness and individuality which differentiates populations from each other and which endows a given population with a definite identity, both in their own eyes and in those of outsiders" (pp21-2).

<sup>190</sup> *Op. cit.*, p17. Cf. Özkirimli, pp 174-5.

<sup>191</sup> As above.

3. *When and where* does the nation arise? What were the specific ideas, groups and locations that predisposed the formation of individual nations at particular times and places?”<sup>192</sup>

Smith endeavours to answer these throughout the entire corpus of his writings. In reply to the first, he provides definitions of ethnic communities and nations. *Ethnies* are human populations discerned by both members and outsiders as possessing the following attributes:

- “1. an identifying name or emblem;
2. a myth of common ancestry;
3. shared historical memories and traditions;
4. one or more elements of common culture;
5. a link with an historic territory or ‘homeland’;
6. a measure of solidarity, at least among the élites”.<sup>193</sup>

The affinity with the nation becomes clear from his summary of its properties: “*a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members*”.<sup>194</sup> As he himself remarks, however, the two types of

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<sup>192</sup> Smith 1991, p19, emphasis in the original. Cf. Özkirimli, p175.

<sup>193</sup> *Myths*, p13 (cf. also pp105-6). This represents a slightly modified version of the definition presented in Smith 1991, p21. In his essay *Nations and History*, published in Guibernau and Hutchinson *op. cit.*, pp9-31, he gives the following shorter version: “*a named unit of population with common ancestry myths and shared historical memories, elements of shared culture, a link with a historic territory, and some measure of solidarity, at least among the élites*” (p19, emphasis in the original, henceforth Smith 2001). In *Ethnic*, he charts the “dimensions of *ethnie*” (p22) in detail: collective name, pp22-24; common myth of descent, pp24-5; shared history, pp25-6; distinctive shared culture, pp26-8; association with specific territory, pp28-9 and a sense of solidarity, pp29-30. Likewise on p42 of *Ethnic*, he presents an ideal-type of pre-modern *ethnies*.

<sup>194</sup> Smith 1991, p14, emphasis in the original. In his more recent *The Nation in History: Historiographical Debates about Ethnicity and Nationalism* (henceforth Smith 2000), University Press of New England, Hanover, 2000, he reworks this: “*a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members*” (p3, emphasis in the original). Similarly, on p104 of *Myths*, he sketches an ideal-type of the nation, from which he extracts a definition almost identical to that in Smith 2000. He raises a number of valuable points about it (pp104-5). To kick off with it is modernist in the sense that its very concepts are meaningless outside the modern setting, although his refusal to give his blessing to the modernist explanation of nations and nationalism stands

community differ in important respects. Firstly, modern nations appeal to and equate the nation with the whole people as citizens, something that only happened very rarely before the onset of modernity; secondly, they are political communities, with a common code of laws stipulating the rights and duties of citizenship, their legitimation grounded in the ideology of nationalism with its ideals of autonomy, unity, authenticity and popular sovereignty; thirdly, they constitute a distinct territorial community, in which the population inhabits its historic homeland and is united by a shared national landscape, with unfettered mobility throughout the area in question and, finally, they take their place within an “inter-national” system of nation-states, which has during the twentieth century become truly global for the first time in history.<sup>195</sup>

Furthermore, the relationship between ethnic community and nation is rarely straightforward: “Seldom will we find a one-to-one correspondence between antecedent *ethnie* and subsequent nation; few modern nations are culturally homogenous and most have diverse ethnic origins, especially if we narrow the

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undiminished. It treats subjective elements such as myths and memories as objective realities. On the one hand, each constituent is the brainchild of nationalists and others, whilst on the other each has an empirical referent, for example, a chronicle or epic poem and an institutional embodiment, such as courts of law. Another feature is that the definition makes no mention of the state. Although Smith accepts Weber’s dictum that a nation is a common bond of sentiment whose adequate expression would be a state of its own and which normally tends to give birth to one, the very use of the qualification “normally” suggests that the nation is first and foremost a social and cultural community independent of the state and that it can exist without a state to call its own. State and nation should be kept conceptually distinct. His final comment is that it is silent on ethnic identity in spite of the two being intimately related. Indeed, the nation is “a sub-category of, and development out of, the far more common phenomenon of the ethnic community, which is itself a development out of the global phenomenon of the ethnic category” (p105).

<sup>195</sup> *Smith 2001*, pp19-20. He acknowledges his debt to Greenfeld (*op. cit.* chapter one) for the first of these. The implied periodization, whereby pre-modern epochs are characterized by “ethnicity” and the prevalence of *ethnies*, whilst the modern age is one of nations and nationalism requires certain qualifications, which he deals with on pp20-22. Cf. also *Smith 1991*, p40 and p69, where he places greater emphasis on “a unified economy with a single division of labour, and mobility of goods and persons throughout the national territory”; “a fairly compact territory, preferably with ‘natural’ defensible frontiers, in a world of similar compact nations” and “a single ‘political culture’ and public, mass education and media system, to socialize future generations to be ‘citizens’ of the new system” as the modern properties of the nation.



concept of ethnicity down to actual physical descent".<sup>196</sup> Using the broader definition, however, it is possible to reach the conclusion that "dominant or 'core' *ethnies* furnished much of the *cultural* basis for the formation of nations in general, and provided later nationalists with many cultural elements for forging modern nations".<sup>197</sup>

Given the high proportion of subjective components in ethnic identity, the *ethnie* can hardly be considered as primordial. As the significance of each waxes and wanes for the individual members of a community, so does the cohesion and self-awareness of the community as a whole. Coalescence and division represent the governing principles of ethnic formation. In the course of the first, separate units come together with, for example, city-states being amalgamated or of absorption of one group by another, as in the assimilation of regions or tribes. The second is where *ethnies* are subdivided through fission, as with sectarian schism, or proliferation, when a part of an ethnic community leaves it to establish a new group.<sup>198</sup> The frequency of such processes attests to the shifting nature of ethnic boundaries and the malleability, within certain limits, of their members' cultural identity, although neither of these should be exaggerated to the point where it becomes impossible to account for the recurrence of ethnic ties and their durability through changes in particular instances. It also "reveals the 'concentric' nature of ethnic, and more generally collective cultural, affiliations. That is to say, individuals may feel loyalty not only to their families, villages, castes, cities, regions and religious communities, as well as to class and gender identifications; they may also feel allegiances to different ethnic communities at different levels of identification simultaneously".<sup>199</sup> At any specific moment, one or other of these might take priority for political, economic or other reasons, but this in itself merely shores up the 'instrumentalist' arguments against primordialism.

Smith favours reconstituting the notion of collective cultural identity in historical, subjective and symbolic terms: "Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive

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<sup>196</sup> Smith 2001, p23.

<sup>197</sup> As above.

<sup>198</sup> Smith 1991, pp23-4. Smith borrows the term "proliferation" from Donald Horowitz's *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1985, pp64-74.

<sup>199</sup> Smith 1991, p24.

generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture".<sup>200</sup> Traumatic events such as war and conquest, exile and enslavement, the influx of immigrants or religious conversion may scramble the basic patterning, but destruction of identity is not their inevitable consequence. Quite the opposite: where combined with a rich inner history, such adverse external disruptions to the peaceful life of the community may help to crystallize and perpetuate ethnic identities. State-making, military mobilization and organized religion are particularly valuable in nurturing ethnic awareness.<sup>201</sup>

The characteristic mechanisms of ethnic self-renewal are religious reform (Smith contrasts the Jewish and Greek experiences), cultural borrowing (whereby selective absorption of foreign input and controlled cultural contact provide sustenance to the community), popular participation (with movements agitating for greater participation in the cultural or political hierarchy) and myths of ethnic election (belonging to a chosen people).<sup>202</sup> Together with location, autonomy, polyglot and trading skills and the organized religion already alluded to, these contribute to ensuring the continued existence of ethnic communities, the gradual build-up of ethnic cores, or "fairly cohesive and self-consciously distinctive *ethnies* which form the kernel and basis of states and kingdoms such as the barbarian *regna* of the early medieval era".<sup>203</sup> As indicated earlier, the significance of these is that "a state's ethnic core often shapes the character and boundaries of the nation; for it is very often on the basis of such a core that states coalesce to form nations".<sup>204</sup> He continues: "For, since *ethnies* are by definition associated with a given territory, not infrequently a chosen people with a particular sacred land, the presumed boundaries of the nation are largely determined by the myths and memories of the dominant *ethnie*, which include the foundation

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<sup>200</sup> *Op. cit.*, p25.

<sup>201</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp25-6. Cf. also, p28.

<sup>202</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp35-7. See also *Chosen Peoples: Why Ethnic Groups Survive in Myths*, pp125-147.

On p125, Smith talks about four patterns of ethnic survival: imperial-dynastic, communal-demotic, emigrant-colonist and diaspora-restoration (each considered in greater detail on pp136-8). More generally on ethnic survival and dissolution, see *Ethnic*, pp92-125.

<sup>203</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp38-9.

<sup>204</sup> *Op. cit.*, p39.

charter, the myth of the golden age and the associated territorial claims, or ethnic title-deeds".<sup>205</sup> However, not all nations have immediate antecedent *ethnie*, which renders the relationship between the two "problematic and uncertain".<sup>206</sup> At this juncture, Smith salvages his central hypothesis that the origin of the nation is to be sought in pre-modern ethnic ties by citing three reasons not to abandon it. Firstly, there is no doubt that the earliest nations did evolve out of ethnic cores and because they were powerful and culturally influential they provided models for subsequent cases of nation-building around the world. Secondly, part of the appeal of these ethnic models was that they were "sociologically fertile", sitting easily on the "demotic" kind of community that had made it as far as modern times.<sup>207</sup> Lastly, even where ethnic ties were shadowy or altogether absent the need to cobble together a coherent mythology and symbolism of a community and history from whatever cultural raw materials were available became paramount as a condition of national survival and unity.<sup>208</sup>

To answer his second question, on the matter of why and how *ethnies* transmute into nations, Smith begins by drawing a distinction between two kinds of ethnic community, the "lateral" and the "vertical".<sup>209</sup> The former "was usually composed of aristocrats and higher clergy, though it might from time to time include bureaucrats, high military officials and the richer merchants. It is termed lateral because it was at once socially confined to the upper strata while being geographically spread out to form often close links with the upper echelons of neighbouring lateral *ethnies*".<sup>210</sup> Consequently, its borders were ragged and it lacked social depth. The latter was comparatively more compact, its ethnic culture diffused to other social strata and classes. Instead of social divisions being underpinned by cultural differences, the historical culture helped to unite classes around a common heritage and traditions. As

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<sup>205</sup> As above.

<sup>206</sup> Smith 1991, p41. Cf. also Özkirimli, pp177-8.

<sup>207</sup> Smith 1991, p41.

<sup>208</sup> Smith 1991, p42. See also Section 5.2 below.

<sup>209</sup> Smith 1991, p52. See also *Ethnic*, pp76-7 for general comments; pp79-83 on the lateral *ethnie* in detail and pp83-87 on vertical *ethnie*, where he examines city-state amphictyonies, frontier, tribal confederations and diasporas and sects as sub-types. On the processes by which *ethnie* evolve into nations, see *Ethnic*, pp153-173.

<sup>210</sup> *Op. cit.*, p53.

a result the ethnic bond was often more intense and exclusive and barriers to admission higher.<sup>211</sup>

The trajectory of lateral *ethnies* towards nationhood took them along the course of “bureaucratic incorporation” with the creation of strong states, which adopted and spread an élite culture to outlying regions and lower strata over centuries, such as occurred in France, England, Castile-Spain and Sweden.<sup>212</sup> In the first two cases, the relatively early development of their nations coincided with successive revolutions in the spheres of administration, the economy (capitalism) and culture (the decline of ecclesiastical authority, the rise of secular studies and radical improvements in communications). Smith denies that the state created the nation, that its activities of taxation, conscription and administration generated a sense of corporate identity and civic loyalty. If deep state penetration of society were the criterion of nationhood, nations in the West came into being several centuries later than conventional wisdom holds. Their temporal priority over other examples of nation-forming would comprise no more than a few decades, as the lower classes were not politically incorporated until the very end of the nineteenth century and women not until the 1920s. The influence of England and France in the wider world was exerted well beforehand, however, so that the mass mobilizing state cannot take the credit for producing the nation, at least in the perceptions of others. The state’s share of the responsibility was in conjunction with the other processes mentioned.<sup>213</sup> In short, although ultimately the modern nation was “the outcome of a vigorous programme of political socialization through the public, mass education system” it was long preceded by the more gradual dissemination of an aristocratic ethnic culture, which eventually grew into a more truly national one.<sup>214</sup>

The alternative route was that of “vernacular mobilization” followed by the “vertical” or demotic *ethnies*. Here an indigenous intelligentsia, opposed to imperial rule seeks to spur “the people” into political action through the rediscovery of ethno-history and the politicization of vernacular culture, which has been preserved by the church and

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<sup>211</sup> As above.

<sup>212</sup> *Smith 1991*, p55; *Smith 2001*, p25 and *Myths*, p18.

<sup>213</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp59-61. See also *Ethnic*, p77.

<sup>214</sup> *Smith 1991*, p61.

local communities.<sup>215</sup> In responding to Western ideologies and discourses its main task is to provide new communal self-definitions and goals, purifying the community from the accretions of centuries and thereby emancipating it. Passive subordination is replaced by active political assertion; various movements strive to place the community in its homeland, a secure and recognized compact territory and to achieve economic unity within it; to celebrate the masses by re-educating them in national values, memories and myths and to turn ethnic members into legal “citizens” by conferring civil, social and political rights on them.<sup>216</sup> The success of these undertakings in the face of hostility from both the imperial power and the guardians of tradition whose leadership was jeopardized by the new definitions hinged on a return to the living past, no mere quarry for antiquarian research, but derived from the sentiments of the people. A twofold strategy of furnishing “maps” of the community, its history and destiny and “moralities” for the regenerated collectivity to inspire the present generations to emulate the public virtues deemed to express the national character was pursued. The intellectuals constructed the maps and moralities in two ways. The first was through a return to “nature” and its “poetic spaces”, transforming the homeland from stage set for the national drama to protagonist in it, whilst the second was through the cult of golden ages.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp61-68; *Myths*, p18 and *Smith 2001*, p25. In *Smith 1991*, the emphasis is more on vertical *ethnies* as subject communities cemented together through organized religion, sacred scriptures, liturgy, rituals and clergy. Among communities such as the Byzantine Greeks, early Orthodox Russians, Monophysite Copts and Ethiopians, Gregorian Armenians, Catholic Irish and Poles, Sikhs, Jews and Druse, religion connotes a whole way of life. As he explored the concept of ethno-history more thoroughly, Smith has shifted his focus to Central and Eastern Europe, downplaying the religious side (cf. pp126-131 of *Smith 1991*; *Smith 1998*, p194, *Myths*, p18 and pp171-181 and *Smith 2001*, p25). I have therefore followed his lead and concentrated on the latter in my summary. Cf. *Özirimli*, pp179-180, which includes both. Again in his more recent work, Smith also speaks of a third path, the immigrant-colonist, in which the founding immigrant part-*ethnie* is supplemented by waves of pioneering colonizers who together create a plural or polyethnic immigrant nation (*Myths*, p18). Since this does not apply to Europe I do not concern myself with it. For a more elaborate statement of the argument, see *Smith 1998*, p194; his *Global*, pp85-115 and *Özirimli*, p180.

<sup>216</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp64-5.

<sup>217</sup> *Smith 1991*, pp65-6. See also *Ethnic*, pp183-190 on landscapes; pp191-200 on golden ages and pp202 and 207 on maps and moralities.

Smith's final question, concerning when and where nations arose, brings the issue of nationalism to the fore.<sup>218</sup> He is in no doubt as to the modernity of the phenomenon, bowing to the virtual consensus amongst historians that it is a product of the eighteenth century.<sup>219</sup> As a term, nationalism has been used in several ways. It can signify:

- “1. the whole process of forming and maintaining nations or nation-states
  2. a consciousness of belonging to the nation, together with sentiments and aspirations for its security and prosperity
  3. a language and symbolism of the ‘nation’ and its role
  4. an ideology, including a cultural doctrine of nations and the national will and prescriptions for the realization of national aspirations and the national will
  5. a social and political movement to achieve the goals of the nation and realize its national will”.
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His own definition of nationalism is “*an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’*”.

<sup>221</sup>

The central propositions or “core doctrine” of the ideology are as follows:

- “1. The world is divided into nations, each with its own individuality, history and destiny.

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<sup>218</sup> *Smith 1991*, p99 and *Özkirimli*, p180.

<sup>219</sup> *Myths*, p46. On pp114 of *Myths*, he writes: “The emergence of nationalism marks a critical divide in the history of ethnicity and nationality. For only after 1800 has it been possible for every self-aware *ethnie* and political community to claim the title of nation and strive to become as like the nationalists’ pure type of the nation as possible. Before the eighteenth century, no such doctrine or movement was available to confirm nations in their status, or guide would-be nations to their goal”. See also *Smith 1991*, p44; *Smith 2001*, p22 and *Ethnic*, p18.

<sup>220</sup> *Smith 1991*, p72. Cf. *Myths*, p101, where he pares this down to four usages (the whole process of growth of nations and national states; sentiments of attachment to and pride in the nation; an ideology and language (discourse) extolling the nation and a movement with national aspirations and goals) and warns against confusing “national sentiment” with the ideology/language and movement of “nationalism”: “One can have nationalist movements and ideologies in a given unit of population, without any real diffusion of national sentiment in that population”.

<sup>221</sup> *Smith 1991*, p73, cf. also p51, emphasis in the original. See also *Myths*, pp18 and 189 (where instead of “population” he talks of “social group”) and *Smith 2000*, p3. On identity in the nationalist triad, see *Smith 1991*, pp74-6; on unity, pp76-7.

2. The nation is the source of all political and social power, and loyalty to the nation overrides all other allegiances.

3. Human beings must identify with a nation if they want to be free and realize themselves.

4. Nations must be free and secure if peace and justice are to prevail in the world".<sup>222</sup>

From this it becomes clear that in Smith's view nationalism is an ideology of the nation, not the state. The notion that every nation must have its own state is a common, but not necessary deduction from the doctrine. Nor has every nationalist movement made acquisition of a state its primary goal. In brief, as Smith reiterates: nationalism is "a political ideology with a cultural doctrine at its centre".<sup>223</sup> It provides the "legitimizing principle of politics and statemaking today".<sup>224</sup>

The charge of attributing no real significance to identity, which I have levelled against the modernists, does not apply to the ethno-symbolists. Rather than considering it a mere epiphenomenon, the latter place identity at the very heart of their argument. A.D. Smith in particular has fully acknowledged the uses to which history is put in constructing an identity, a subject to which we shall return later. Therefore, whilst I recognise the merit of the modernists' insights as regards the recent date of nationalism as an ideology, I agree with the ethno-symbolists that nations slowly evolved from earlier collectivities, preserving and building upon elements of their myths and memories.

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<sup>222</sup> *Smith 1991*, p74. Cf. *Myths*, p102, where he under point one stresses "character and destiny", rewords point three ("everyone must belong to a nation, if everyone is to be truly free") and adds a fourth ("to realize themselves, nations must be autonomous") and pp188-9. On specific contents, see also *Smith 1991*, pp46-7, p49 and p70.

<sup>223</sup> *Smith 1991*, p74. Cf. also p84 for the "deeper meaning" of nationalism.

<sup>224</sup> *Ethnic*, p129. For critiques of Smith, see Guibernau, *op.cit.*, pp50-1 and Breuilly 1996, pp150-1.

## I.4 Social Psychological Approaches

### Michael Billig

Michael Billig's *Banal Nationalism*<sup>225</sup> constitutes, in Özkirimli's words: "the first study that provides a systematic analysis of the reproduction of nationalism".<sup>226</sup> The author begins by contesting the customary usage of the term "nationalism" in both popular and academic writing, where it is associated with those who struggle to create new states or with extreme right-wing politics: "It always seems to locate nationalism on the periphery. Separatists are often to be found in the outer regions of states; the extremists lurk on the margins of political life in established democracies, usually shunned by the sensible politicians of the centre. The guerrilla figures, seeking to establish their new homelands, operate in conditions where existing structures of state have collapsed, typically at a distance from the established centres of the West".<sup>227</sup> This banishes nationalism to the outer reaches, investing it with an exoticism, which allows those in long-standing nations to view it as the property of others. Such complacency is misleading because it overlooks the nationalism of the West's nation-states, which is not simply an intermittent mood, but the endemic condition.<sup>228</sup>

In times of peace, where no crisis prompts leaders to unfurl the national flag and issue a call to arms, countries such as France, the United Kingdom and the United States rely upon a complex of beliefs, assumptions, habits, representations and practices to reproduce themselves as nations and their citizenries as nationals within a global context of nations. Far from being accomplished through tub-thumping or ostentatious displays of patriotic muscle, this reproduction is so subtle as to melt into the background, hence Billig's term "banal nationalism". Daily, the nation is "flagged" in the course of the everyday business of living in the established nations

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<sup>225</sup> Bibliographical details are given in footnote 127, p35. For an alternative summary, see Özkirimli, pp199-203.

<sup>226</sup> Özkirimli, p199. Although Billig himself adopts a modernist stance (pp9-10 and pp19-29), Özkirimli subsumes his work under the heading of „new approaches" (Özkirimli, pp190-8). Combining elements from Gellner, Giddens and Benedict Anderson (p10), Billig identifies nationalism as the ideology that creates and maintains nation-states: „There can be no nationalism without nation-states; and, thus, nationalism, as a way of depicting community, is a historically specific form of consciousness" (p19).

<sup>227</sup> Billig, p5.

<sup>228</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp6-7.



(those which have confidence in their own continuity): “nationhood provides a continual background for their political discourses, for cultural products, and even for the structuring of newspapers. In so many little ways, the citizenry are reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building”.<sup>229</sup>

Building on Hobsbawm’s contention that no serious historian of nations and nationalism can be a committed political nationalist,<sup>230</sup> Billig suggests that more distancing has to be done by a social scientist wishing to study nationalism as an ideology. Metaphorical brackets have to be employed to permit him to question the obviousness of existing social arrangements. The very concepts, which seem so solidly real, do not themselves stand outside the topic to be analysed. Common sense about nationhood, the psychology of national attachments and the like should be located within the history of nationalism as this reveals them to be products of a particular age.<sup>231</sup>

By ignoring its banal manifestations, many social scientists have projected nationalism onto others and naturalized “our” nationalism out of existence. This occurs in two types of theorizing, which frequently accompany each other. Billig refers to the first as “projecting theories”. They “tend to define nationalism in a restricted way, as an extreme/surplus phenomenon. Nationalism is equated with the outlook of nationalist movements and, when there are no such movements, nationalism is not seen to be an issue”.<sup>232</sup> This is often flanked by a claim that nationalism is impelled by irrational emotions. Insistence on the part of theorists that they are furnishing a rational account of the phenomenon serves as a declaration of immunity. They inhabit a world of nations, however, carrying passports and paying taxes. Their theories take this world for granted as the “natural” environment in which the dramas of nationalism periodically erupt, bringing us neatly back to what

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<sup>229</sup> Billig, p8.

<sup>230</sup> Hobsbawm, p12.

<sup>231</sup> Billig, pp14-16. Cf. also Szporluk, p166.

<sup>232</sup> *Op. cit.*, p16.

they leave out and how this allows them to deny that nationalism as a condition affects “us”.

The second type comprises “naturalizing theories”, whereby contemporary loyalties to nation-states are presented as instances of something, which is psychologically general, an integral feature of the human condition. Banal nationalism not only ceases to be nationalism, but also drops off the horizon as a problem for investigation.<sup>233</sup> Moreover, “our” nationalism is cordoned off from the dangerous variety by means of the rhetorical device, which casts it as “patriotism”, a beneficial force. Some social scientists separate the two by maintaining that they represent different states of mind, whilst others base the psychological distinction on the direction (love of country as opposed to hatred of foreigners) of the attitudes rather than their intensity.<sup>234</sup>

In order to avoid lapsing into such errors, Billig proposes putting the focus back on “us” by subjecting the “infinite variety of psychological acts” required for the reproduction of nation-states to critical scrutiny: “This necessitates reversing the theoretical frameworks of many conventional theories of social psychology, which presume that psychological variables are universal, rather than historically created”.<sup>235</sup> Both remembering and forgetting are vital to the process of banal reproduction. Renan had recognised the importance of the latter.<sup>236</sup> In a nutshell, as Billig points out: “once a nation is established, it depends for its continued existence upon a collective amnesia”.<sup>237</sup> What Renan omits is the parallel forgetting of the present.

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<sup>233</sup> *Op. cit.*, p17. Cf. also pp43-4 for the theoretical neglect of banal nationalism and p44 for “hot” nationalism (outbreaks of nationalist passion, which arise in times of social disruption and are reflected in extreme social movements).

<sup>234</sup> Billig, pp55-6. Walker Connor’s writings are quoted by way of an example. As Billig concludes, these assertions are extremely difficult to back up with empirical proof.

<sup>235</sup> Billig, p17. See also pp38-9. On pp51-9, Billig discusses the common sense content of academic disciplines and what it hides. He does not believe that he himself is pure as the driven snow, unaffected by banal nationalism as a social psychologist (cf. p12): “Traces of nationalism and flag-waving are not merely to be found in others. Analysts, too, should confess” (p125). He practices what he preaches on pp125-6.

<sup>236</sup> Billig, p37. Cf. also Gellner’s lecture *Nationalism and the Two Forms of Cohesion in Complex Society*, reprinted in *Culture, Identity and Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987, pp6-28. The section on Renan can be found on pp6-8.

<sup>237</sup> Billig, p38.

Reminders of national identity are so numerous and familiar that they operate mindlessly rather than mindfully, absorbed into the surroundings.<sup>238</sup> Similarly, patterns of social life become habitual and in so doing embody the past. Billig calls this process “enhabitation”: “thoughts, reactions and symbols become turned into routine habits and, thus, they become inhabited. The result is that the past is inhabited in the present in a dialectic of forgotten remembrance”.<sup>239</sup> The multitude of fluttering decorative flags become inhabited and “turn background space into homeland space”.<sup>240</sup>

For Billig, a national identity embraces all these forgotten reminders. Consequently it is to be found in the habits of social life, including those of thinking and using language.<sup>241</sup> A particular manner of conceiving the nation is encouraged, which historically brought about a transformation in the ways that people thought about themselves and about community. The fluctuating boundaries of the tribe or “sphere of trade”, previously the locus of identity were supplanted by fixed boundaries and clearly delineated identities. Nationalism was the instrument of change. It is “a theory of community, as well as a theory about the world being ‘naturally’ divided into such communities”.<sup>242</sup> Billig perceptively highlights the political implications of such thought: “The assertion of belonging to a ‘people’, if made in a political context in which ‘peoples’ are assumed to deserve nation-states, is not an assertion of an inner psychological identity. A movement of national independence will not only claim that ‘we are a nation’, but, in so doing, it will be demanding the political entitlements which are presumed to follow from being a nation”.<sup>243</sup> In other words: “as the world of nations is set in place as *the* world, so the theory becomes inhabited in common

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<sup>238</sup> Billig, in distinguishing between the symbolic and signalling (communicating particular messages with practical information content) functions of flags, expressed in the image of waved and unwaved flags, rightly stresses that a symbol need not have a direct emotional impact to be effective. For example, most national flags do not demand to be saluted: “They are merely there as symbols, whether on a forecourt or flashed on to a television screen; as such they are given hardly a second glance from day to day” (p40).

<sup>239</sup> Billig, p42.

<sup>240</sup> *Op. cit.*, p43.

<sup>241</sup> *Op. cit.*, p8. Later, he refers to national identity as “a short-hand for a whole series of familiar assumptions about nationhood, the world and ‘our’ place in that world” (p93).

<sup>242</sup> *Op. cit.*, p63.

<sup>243</sup> As above.

sense”.<sup>244</sup> Billig explicitly warns against the temptation to explain the nationalist mindset in terms of identity as if the latter were a psychological state divorced from contact with forms of life. Instead, nationalism is “a way of being within the world of nations” as well as a feeling of identity and an interpretation of the world.<sup>245</sup> Members of a nation have to be in a position to know what a nation is and to identify the identity of their own nation and they are surrounded by verbal and other cues, which ensure that they never completely forget.<sup>246</sup> Nationhood, however, requires a homeland as well as of a people. This entails “the imagining of a bounded totality beyond the immediate experience of place”.<sup>247</sup> In the standard modern nationalist idiom, one national territory does not shade into another, but nations stop abruptly at demarcated frontiers. The country is the home of homes, a unity comprising outlying districts and metropolitan areas alike and must be considered special.<sup>248</sup> The mysticism of this vision slips quietly into the waters of Lethe and so nations appear as inevitable entities.<sup>249</sup>

Inwardness and outwardness are as essential to nationalism as a division between “us” and “them”. “Internationalism” is not its polar opposite as if it were a rival ideological consciousness.<sup>250</sup> Without constant observation of the world of other nations, nationalists would not be able to claim that their nations meet the accepted

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<sup>244</sup> As above, emphasis in the original.

<sup>245</sup> Billig, p65. To his mind, the heart of the problem is “that the historical particularities of nationalism, and its links with the world of nation-states, tend to be overlooked, if national ‘identity’ is considered as functionally equivalent with any other type of ‘identity’. A complex topography of heights and depths then becomes flattened into a single plain” (p65).

<sup>246</sup> Billig, p68. For example, “stodgy government documents” make use of a grammar of basic categories for “their” country and people, which is part of the “universal code of nationality” (p77).

<sup>247</sup> Billig, p74. Although he borrows Benedict Anderson’s terminology, Billig remains true to his line of argument on banal nationalism by indicating the limitations of Anderson’s model: “In established nations, the imagination becomes enhabited, and, thereby, inhibited. In this sense, the term ‘imagined community’ may be misleading. The community and its place are not so much imagined, but their absence becomes unimaginable” (p77).

<sup>248</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp74-5.

<sup>249</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp77-8.

<sup>250</sup> *Op. cit.*, p61. Billig makes the valuable point that: “Nationalism, like other ideologies, contains its contrary themes, or dilemmatic aspects”. He returns to this theme on pp87-8.

criteria of recognition as such.<sup>251</sup> Furthermore, they would not have ready access to stereotyped judgements about foreigners.<sup>252</sup> Far from being the preserve of narrow-minded bigots, stereotypes are “shared, cultural descriptions of social groups”, which contribute to “our” perception of a unique identity.<sup>253</sup>

Billig then moves on to examine the daily flaggings of nationhood in detail through exploring familiar linguistic useages, particularly the small words (rather than the grand memorable phrases), starting with political discourse.<sup>254</sup> Although they are not necessarily figures of great influence, politicians are important because, in the electronic age, their faces are shown regularly in newspapers and on television screens bestowing celebrity status upon them.<sup>255</sup> The nation-state supplies the backdrop for political debate and the politicians represent the nation to itself in the dual meaning of “standing” or “speaking” for and “depiction”: “At its simplest level, the politician, who claims or campaigns to speak for the interests of the nation, will evoke the nation”.<sup>256</sup> Seen in this light, nationalism is not a particular political strategy, but the condition for conventional strategies and is therefore not confined to populist right-wing parties, even though the “patriotic card” is commonly played by the latter.<sup>257</sup> On the contrary, nationalist clichés and platitudes are to be found in unspectacular speeches delivered during or after elections, which journalists did not feel the need to comment on as specifically patriotic, sarcastically or otherwise.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp61 and 85-6. This recognition hinges not upon „internal unity” of ethnicity, language or culture, but on the state’s ability to impose order and monopolize violence within established boundaries (p85). Here, Billig is following Giddens.

<sup>252</sup> *Op. cit.*, p80.

<sup>253</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp80 and 81.

<sup>254</sup> *Billig*, pp93-4 and p96.

<sup>255</sup> *Billig*, p96. Their fame comes from participation in national politics (p96). The simultaneous celebration of democracy and nationhood in today’s political rhetoric is no coincidence: “In the world of nations, democracy is nationally structured; its organization follows national boundaries; nations, or their ‘people’, are democratic actors, who are conventionally said to make their own choices, and who are to be represented democratically. It is as if democracy today knows no other home, no other grounding, except national homelands” (p97).

<sup>256</sup> *Billig*, p98. What occurs is not merely an elision of the two types of representation, but also of the general and the particular interest.

<sup>257</sup> *Billig*, pp99-100. See also, p103.

<sup>258</sup> *Billig*, p104. He deliberately selects examples from the left-wing British press as confirmation.

Where remote communication has become the norm, not only does the style of address change (with a blurring of the audiences of supporters who have gathered to hear the orations of a politician in a hall or conference room and the wider audience of random viewers who will potentially overhear his words from the comfort of their armchairs), but a “deixis of little words” flows from the mouths of “our” representatives to invoke the national “we” and place “us” within “our” homeland.<sup>259</sup> The unobtrusive nature of deixis can be demonstrated by considering the use of the definite article, such as in “the nation”, “the people” and “the country”. No specification is called for: “the” nation is “this” nation and, by extension “our” nation.<sup>260</sup> What is “ours” is conflated with the objective world: “The homeland is made both present and unnoticeable by being presented as *the* context. When the homeland-making phrases are used with regularity, ‘we’ are unmindfully reminded who ‘we’ are and ‘where’ we are. ‘We’ are identified without even being mentioned”.<sup>261</sup>

To deflect the possible objection that rhetorical flagging and deixis are restricted to the circles of professional politicians, Billig directs his attention to the media with a day survey of British national newspapers split into three market groups, the “sensational” tabloids, the “respectable” tabloids and the broadsheets.<sup>262</sup> The “context of awareness”, or underlying pattern of the news items employs a deixis of “here” and “now”. The latter is straightforward, understood as the “now” of up-to-date news, whilst the former is somewhat more complex.<sup>263</sup> Particularly in their

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<sup>259</sup> Billig, pp106 and 107. The term “deixis” is taken from linguistics and “has to do with the ways in which sentences are anchored to certain aspects of their contexts of utterance”. It can include interjections and metaphors as well as pronouns.

<sup>260</sup> Billig, p107. For further examples, see pp108-9.

<sup>261</sup> *Op. cit.*, p109, emphasis in the original.

<sup>262</sup> *Op. cit.*, p110. On pp110-1 he lists the sources by name, explaining the niceties of ownership, sales volumes and target readership. The reasons behind the selection of the day in question, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1993, are set out on p111. As Billig makes clear: “To demonstrate this systematically, it would be necessary to sample the various forms of mass media and mass culture over a lengthy period in a number of countries. Of particular interest would be the quotient of flagging on ‘ordinary’ days, which are not days of national celebration or intense electoral campaigning” (p109). For the main contents of the newspapers included in the survey, see pp111-4.

<sup>263</sup> Billig, p114. “Context of awareness” is taken from Stuart Hall’s *Introduction to A.C.H. Smith’s Paper Voices*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1975.

opinion and editorial columns, newspapers, irrespective of the population segment they cater for, resemble politicians in speaking to and for the nation as well as representing it in both senses of the word. Similarly, weather reporting implies a national deixis, which is repeated day in day out. A small map of Britain, not actually labelled as such, is printed and the only gales, scattered showers or sunshine worthy of note are those affecting “us”, the weather as contained within national boundaries.<sup>264</sup>

In addition, the deixis is built into the organization of many newspapers, especially the broadsheets with home and overseas or foreign news sections.<sup>265</sup> The cumulative effect of these constant flaggings is that “whatever else is forgotten in a world of information overload, we do not forget our homelands”.<sup>266</sup> If we are being primed for the dangers of the future, this does not take the form of a topping up of aggressive energy, but of “reading and watching, of understanding and taking for granted”.<sup>267</sup>

By focusing on the cognitive impact of nationalism, Billig’s superb study brings nationalism “home” to “us”, reclaiming it from the dustbin of history.<sup>268</sup> What I denote as the “contagious” effects of the nationalist principle of classification in their “constricting of the imagination” are set out with the utmost clarity.<sup>269</sup> The role of representations in the mundane yet vitally important task of weaving and reweaving the social fabric is also accurately outlined.<sup>270</sup> To Billig I owe both the focus upon

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<sup>264</sup> Billig, p117.

<sup>265</sup> Billig, pp117-9. On the sports pages, see pp119-122. Although perusing them may seem nothing more than a harmless male pleasure, they insidiously prime the nation’s sons for the ultimate sacrifice of laying down their lives on the battlefield (pp122-5). Sport occasionally strays into the main body of the newspaper where its idols are held up as objects of female adoration (p126).

<sup>266</sup> Billig, p127.

<sup>267</sup> As above.

<sup>268</sup> Cf. Billig, pp126-7. The modernists have been all too eager to throw nationalism on the scrapheap, labelling it a spent force (see, for example, *Hobsbawm*, pp169, 181 and 188-192).

<sup>269</sup> The phrase can be found on p103.

<sup>270</sup> This section would not be complete without at least mentioning one more social psychology-based work: *Self and Nation*, by Stephen Reicher and Nick Hopkins, Sage, London, 2001. Taking Scottish national identity as its case study, it analyses how discourse and other representations make “the contingent seem necessary” even where the meaning of nationhood is argued over (p51). Their central proposition (and conclusion) is identical to my own: “National identity is always a project, the success

representations and the methodology of discourse-analysis. However, I not only examine the development of representations over a considerably longer time span, which allows the interaction between representations and political changes to emerge more clearly, but I also place them within a wider theory of institutions and identity, providing a more adequate explanation of the taken for granted quality of both representations and institutions.

## 1.5 Hans Kohn and “Eastern” versus “Western” Nationalism

### Hans Kohn

Hans Kohn and his later imitators are of special relevance as they posit a difference in kind between nationalism in the West and its later manifestation in Central and Eastern Europe, the region to which both Hungary and Romania belong.

In two works, *Nationalism: Its Meaning and History*<sup>271</sup> and *The Idea of Nationalism, A Study in its Origins and Background*<sup>272</sup> Kohn traces the history of nationalism back to eighteenth century Western Europe, linking its rise to that of democracy and industrialism with which it continuously interacted in an accelerating process of acculturation, economic exchange and intensification of communication that subsequently spread to every corner of the world.<sup>273</sup> In his opinion a full insight can only be gained by means of a comparative approach, permitting the discernment of different types of nationalism.<sup>274</sup>

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of which depends upon being seen as an essence” (p222). It should also be noted in passing that Scottish nationalism is customarily regarded as “civic”.

<sup>271</sup> D. van Nostrand Company Ltd., Princeton, New Jersey, 1955, henceforth *Nationalism*. Özkirimli refers to him as the founding father of academic scholarship on nationalism together with Carlton Hayes (Özkirimli, p13).

<sup>272</sup> Bibliographical details provided in footnote 107, p30 above.

<sup>273</sup> *Idea*, Preface, VII.

<sup>274</sup> *Idea*, ix and pp119-120: “Nationalism is a product of historical, social and intellectual conditions; its rise in the different countries varies, therefore, according to the conditions prevailing then and there. In its individual and concrete expressions nationalism carries a different meaning with different peoples and at different ages. But an understanding of nationalism can be gained only by comparing similar developments among different peoples; only a universal history of nationalism will enable the student to see each individual case in its proper perspective and in its conditional nature”.



Kohn belongs therefore to the modernist school, although he does not pretend that nationalism was created out of a vacuum: "Like all historical movements, nationalism has its roots deep in the past".<sup>275</sup> Some of its traits are shared with Western civilization in general, extending back to the Hebrews and ancient Greeks. Both of those peoples "had a clearly defined consciousness of being different from all other peoples"; the "bearer of group consciousness was with them not king or priesthood, but the people as a whole" and, whereas with the other peoples of antiquity only rulers and empires left their traces on history, with the Hebrews and Greeks "it was the national character and the spiritual creative energy of the people which endured".<sup>276</sup> Indeed three far from negligible components of modern nationalism originated with the Hebrews, namely "the idea of the chosen people, the emphasis on a common stock of memory of the past and of hopes for the future" and "national messianism",<sup>277</sup> whilst the principle Greek contribution was that of an overriding duty and devotion to the political community.<sup>278</sup>

Kohn defines nationalism as "a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to the nation-state".<sup>279</sup> Claiming to inspire all of the members of a given collectivity, it "asserts that the nation-state is the only legitimate form of political organisation and that the nationality is the source of all cultural creative energy and of economic well-being".<sup>280</sup> From the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards it has become a focus of self-identification, serving "as the justification for the authority of the state and the legitimation of its use of force, both against its own citizens and against other states".<sup>281</sup> Thus the growth of nationalism as the process of integration of the masses of the people into a common political framework presupposes "the existence, in fact or as an ideal, of a centralized form of government over a large and distinct territory", and is inconceivable prior to the emergence of the modern state.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> *Idea*, p3. Cf. Smith, *Myths*, p37.

<sup>276</sup> *Nationalism*, p11. For a more detailed examination, see also *Idea*, pp27-60.

<sup>277</sup> *Nationalism*, p11.

<sup>278</sup> *Nationalism*, p12.

<sup>279</sup> *Nationalism*, p9. See also *Idea*, pp10-12;16 and pp18-19.

<sup>280</sup> *Nationalism*, p10.

<sup>281</sup> *Nationalism*, p11.

<sup>282</sup> *Idea*, p4.

In short: "Nationalism demands the nation-state; the creation of the nation-state strengthens nationalism",<sup>283</sup> the one reinforcing the other.

The influence of the Renaissance with its new concept of princely power was crucial, contributing to the rise of dynastic states, the embryonic form out of which the later nation-states would develop.<sup>284</sup> In sweeping away the various feudal and local allegiances, the absolute monarchs made the integration of all ties of loyalty in one centre possible, although this in itself was insufficient to weld the people together in a nation: for that a fundamental change in the relationship between ruler and ruled had to occur, as expressed in the notion of popular sovereignty.<sup>285</sup>

In seventeenth century England and then in the wake of the French Revolution the state ceased to be the mere property of the king and was regarded as belonging to the people, engendering an unprecedented depth of feeling towards the homeland celebrated in a groundswell of patriotism.<sup>286</sup>

In both instances ordinary individuals had a new dignity bestowed upon them as the subjects, rather than the objects, of history. In both the reinterpretation of the past was accompanied by optimism concerning the future and the message conveyed was "liberal and universal".<sup>287</sup> It was no accident that these strands intertwined: "Nationalism and democracy were in their origin contemporary movements, and in many respects sprang from similar conditions; but nationalism had its roots in the order of group feelings of "natural" cohesion, while democracy was based on the faith in the liberty and equality of each individual".<sup>288</sup>

Amongst the other preconditions that had to be fulfilled before nationalism could occupy a position of ascendancy, Kohn mentions the crumbling of faith in a universal

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<sup>283</sup> *Idea*, p19 For Kohn, a nationality can never be truly content without a state and, whilst it may make do with some degree of autonomy or pre-state organisation on a temporary basis, its ultimate goal will be independent statehood.

<sup>284</sup> *Nationalism*, p14. On Machiavelli's contribution, *Idea*, pp127-9.

<sup>285</sup> *Nationalism*, pp14-15 and *Idea*, p3.

<sup>286</sup> *Nationalism*, p15, *Idea*, p3. Calling the Civil War "the first great surge of nationalism which embraced a whole people", Kohn puts England "a century ahead of the Continent" by virtue of depoliticizing and deterritorializing religion, of introducing religious tolerance and the supremacy of Parliament over the king and the victory of individualism over authoritarianism. *Idea*, p125 and pp166-8. For the favourable conditions England profited from, see *op. cit.*, pp156-157.

<sup>287</sup> *Idea*, pp166-7.

<sup>288</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp191-2.

ideal embodied in the Roman Empire<sup>289</sup> and Christianity<sup>290</sup> with monarchical dynasties as the chief beneficiaries,<sup>291</sup> States emancipating themselves from the power of the Church,<sup>292</sup> the rise of the Third Estate, which represented a potent source of innovation, both culturally and economically, the impact of the Reformation with its promotion of linguistic<sup>293</sup> and religious pluralism, the slow advance of secularisation.<sup>294</sup> On the latter: "The rise of nationalism demanded a new attitude of this-worldliness and affirmation of nature, the birth of individualism, and a new interpretation of history" compared to that of the Middle Ages<sup>295</sup> and the birth of a public opinion.<sup>296</sup>

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<sup>289</sup> "The Roman Empire had converted the *orbis terrarum*, the whole earth, into one city, with a common history in which all participated, with a common civilisation in which all shared and to which all contributed, with a common law in which the influences of Roman, Greek, and Oriental law mingled", *Idea*, p67.

<sup>290</sup> "The universalism of the Empire, which was rooted in Hellenistic civilisation, but devoid of the exclusiveness of the Greek state, prepared the soil for the universalism of Christianity, which was rooted in Judaism, but devoid of the exclusiveness of Israel", *Idea*, p70.

<sup>291</sup> *Idea*, pp188-9: "Etatism, not nationalism, emerged from the disintegration of medieval universalism".

<sup>292</sup> *Op. cit.*, p189.

<sup>293</sup> *Idea*, p143: "it was certainly of importance that Protestant translations of the Bible and Protestant sermons created for European peoples a new literature accessible to the common man, a unified literary language, and thereby a strong tie which could serve as a foundation for the later growth of nationalism. But the Protestant Bibles and prayer books were not motivated by a national spirit; they were intended to serve religious ends".

<sup>294</sup> *Idea*, pp3-4, *Nationalism*, pp12-14. Kohn's depiction of the role played by religion in the medieval period is eloquent: "The whole intellectual and emotional life of man and the political and social ideal of organization were dominated by religious concepts and norms; in a way scarcely imaginable to us, they coloured and determined the thought and feeling of every minute of life", *op. cit.*, p78. Earthly life was but a prelude to eternity and the order of things was "firmly anchored in a supranatural unquestionable revelation", *op. cit.*, p82. Secularisation led to a reassessment of man's position: "less emphasis was put on his sinful nature, more on his original goodness which makes him strive after a peaceful and harmonious order and endows him with the capacity of achieving a lawful order similar to that prevailing throughout nature. Man, every man, could understand this order with the help of the *lumen naturale*, the natural light of reason (...) Nature, formerly the seat of danger, became kind to man; it was recognised as created by God in his all-kindness for the benefit of man, for his secure and peaceful life", *op. cit.*, pp197-8.

<sup>295</sup> *Op. cit.*, p104. These were furnished by the Renaissance, *op. cit.*, pp120-123.

<sup>296</sup> *Op. cit.*, p210.

For Kohn, the strength of nationalism derives from its dissemination amongst the masses and its appropriation of fundamental emotions: "There is a natural tendency in man – and by "natural tendency" we mean a tendency which, having been produced from social circumstances from time practically immemorial, appears to us as natural – to love his birthplace or the place of his childhood sojourn, its surroundings, its climate (...). We are all subject to the immense power of habitude, and even if in a later stage of development we are attracted by the unknown and by change, we delight to come back and to be at rest in the reassuring sight of the familiar".<sup>297</sup> Patriotism was not originally associated with a large territory, restricted instead to the villages, cities or valleys where most people spent their entire lives. Only travel and instruction, privileges beyond the reach of all but the fortunate few, could foster a wider attachment. Kohn, furthermore, denies that nationalism in the sense of solidarity or identification with "the life and aspirations of uncounted millions we shall never know, with a territory which we shall never visit in its entirety" can be deemed the same as love of home and family.<sup>298</sup>

Although some feeling of nationality may occasionally have stirred before modern nationalism it was "largely unconscious and inarticulate",<sup>299</sup> lacking the deep and pervasive quality in informing human thought and action that it later acquired. Certain individuals gave voice to it occasionally and groups only ever in times of stress or provocation, but in the long term it was negligible as a factor in determining aims or actions and could not be understood as a "purposeful will".<sup>300</sup>

Kohn's most famous and lasting contribution to the theory of nationalism is his proposition concerning a radical split between nationalism as it evolved in the West and anywhere else: "In the Western world, in England and in France, in the Netherlands and in Switzerland, in the United States and in the British dominions, the rise of nationalism was a predominantly political occurrence; it was preceded by the formation of the future national state, or, as in the case of the United States, coincided with it. Outside the Western world, in Central and Eastern Europe and in Asia, nationalism arose not only later, but also generally at a more backward stage of social

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<sup>297</sup> *Idea*, p5.

<sup>298</sup> *Idea*, pp8-9.

<sup>299</sup> *Idea*, p6.

<sup>300</sup> *Idea*, pp6 and 17.

and political development: the frontiers of an existing state and of a rising nationality rarely coincided; nationalism, there, grew in protest against and in conflict with the existing state pattern – not primarily to transform it into a people’s state, but to redraw the political boundaries in conformity with ethnographic demands”.<sup>301</sup>

Precisely what this backwardness had consisted of was something Kohn had touched upon earlier in discussing Germany. Luther and other prominent figures had rejected modern capitalism, keeping alive the medieval distrust of commerce and the trading classes, clinging to the antiquated feudal order and equating economic system with moral virtue: the agrarian regime was ethically sound and therefore typically German, anything else wicked.<sup>302</sup> The weakness of the Third Estate was a symptom of the authoritativeness of these ideas.<sup>303</sup> Calvinism, which had taken hold in the countries Kohn deems enlightened and progressive, had insisted upon “the sanctity of work and the rational calculability of the economic process”.<sup>304</sup> As a result: “this rising nationalism outside the Western world found its first expression in the cultural field. It was at the beginning the dream and hope of scholars and poets, unsupported by public opinion – which did not exist, and which the scholars and poets tried to create – a venture in education and propaganda, rather than in policy-shaping and government. At the same time all rising nationalism and the whole modern social and intellectual development outside Western Europe were influenced by the West, which for a long time remained the teacher and the model. Yet this very dependence on the West often wounded the pride of the native educated class, as soon as it began to develop its own nationalism, and ended in an opposition to the “alien” example and its liberal and rational outlook”.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> *Idea*, p329. In his *Cosmopolitanism and the National State* from 1907 Friedrich Meinecke had drawn a similar distinction between cultural and political nations (*Kultur- und Staatsnationen*): “we can still divide nations into cultural nations and political nations, nations that are based primarily on some jointly experienced cultural heritage and nations that are primarily based on the unifying force of a common political history and constitution. A standard language, a common literature and a common religion are the most important and powerful assets that create a cultural nation and hold it together” (p10 and for further elaboration pp9-22 of the 1970 translation published by Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey). See also *Smith 1991*, p8.

<sup>302</sup> *Idea*, p135.

<sup>303</sup> *Op. cit.*, p4.

<sup>304</sup> *Op. cit.*, p199.

<sup>305</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp329-330.

Each new nationalism sought justification and authenticity in the heritage of its past, extolling the primitive and ancient depth and peculiarities of its own traditions: "Nationalism in the West arose in an effort to build a nation in the political reality and the struggles of the present without too much sentimental regard for the past; nationalists in Central and Eastern Europe created often, out of the myths of the past and the dreams of the future, an ideal fatherland, closely linked with the past, devoid of any intimate connection with the present, and expected to become sometime a political reality".<sup>306</sup>

The new nationalisms, not grounded political and social reality, lacked self-assurance, their "inferiority complex was often compensated by over-emphasis and overconfidence".<sup>307</sup> Kohn cites the German example again as evidence: "nationalism in Germany did not find its justification in a rational societal conception, it found it in the "natural" fact of a community, held together, not by the will of its members nor by any obligations of contract, but by traditional ties of kinship and status. German nationalism substituted for the legal and rational concept of "citizenship" the infinitely vaguer concept of "folk" (...). It lent itself more easily to the embroideries of imagination and the excitations of emotion".<sup>308</sup>

The German Romantics misunderstood Rousseau, for whom a nation that expressed itself through the general will could not be a product of nature, transferring his antithesis between nature and folk traditions on the one hand and aristocratic and urban civilisations on the other to the realm of society and nationalism. For them the state was "a mechanical and juridical construction, the artificial product of historical accidents, while they believed the nation to be the work of nature, and therefore something sacred, eternal, organic".<sup>309</sup>

At this juncture Kohn restates his theory concerning the impact of the Reformation and Renaissance in the West and the remainder of Europe, which, in his eyes, amounted to no more than "purely scholarly and theological events", leaving Russia and the Near East untouched.<sup>310</sup> A further indicator of the gulf separating the

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<sup>306</sup> *Op. cit.*, p330.

<sup>307</sup> *Op. cit.*, p330.

<sup>308</sup> *Op. cit.*, p331.

<sup>309</sup> *Idea*, p249.

<sup>310</sup> He quotes the charter drafted at the time of the installation of the Patriarch of Moscow in 1589 proclaiming the city to be the Third Rome, the Tsar the sole Christian ruler in the midst of a sea of

European regions was the lingering fascination with the medieval idea of world empire that persisted in Central and Eastern Europe, its glowing embers stirred by antiquarian research.<sup>311</sup>

On the whole, Kohn's portrayal of the East is not exactly flattering: lagging behind in almost every conceivable respect it wallowed in the slough of despondency, infused with a festering resentment that periodically gave rise to bombastic effusions of the unity of blood and spirit. The nationalisms, which thrived there were not "based upon liberal middle-class concepts and pointing to a consummation in a democratic world society" but battered on "irrational and pre-enlightened concepts" tending towards exclusiveness".<sup>312</sup>

### John Plamenatz

Kohn's typology has been widely criticized and yet much imitated, as illustrated by John Plamenatz.<sup>313</sup> In *Two Types of Nationalism*,<sup>314</sup> Plamenatz goes along with the

ungodliness, *Op. cit.*, p332. See also pp332-3 and pp350-1 on Germany, where Lutherism led to political quietism, the Germans satisfied with being subjects rather than laying claim to the rights and obligations of the politically more self-aware citizens. The pernicious effect of feudal oppression upon the peasantry was to make them sink into "stupidity, vulgarity and physical degeneracy" and to encourage resignation and servility, *Idea*, p350.

<sup>311</sup> *Idea*, p331.

<sup>312</sup> *Op. cit.*, p457. Compare his glowing praise of England on pp178-9 and pp458-461 with his condemnation of the nobles in Poland and Hungary on pp518-526 and pp527-534 respectively. His sympathies are not always consistent with his geographical divisions, however, as his appraisal of nationalism in the Czech lands (pp551-560) and Spain (pp146-155 and pp487-493) reveal.

<sup>313</sup> Further examples would include A. D. Smith's „territorial" and „ethnic" in *Smith 1991*, pp9-14 and 82-3, *Ethnic*, pp134-152, *Smith 2000*, pp6-26 and *Myths*, pp30 and 36-7; Liah Greenfeld's civic and ethnic, *op. cit.*, pp9-12 and in her *Is Nation Unavoidable? Is Nation Unavoidable Today?* in Kriesi, H.; Armingeon, K.; Siegrist, H. and Wimmer, A. (eds.): *Nation and National Identity. The European Experience in Perspective*, Verlag Rüegger, Zürich, 1999, pp37-54; Peter Alter's *Risorgimento* (p19), its sub-type reform in Asia (p23) and integral (p26, coined by French writer Charles Maurras, cf. Özkirimli, p40) in *Nationalism*, Second Edition, Edward Arnold, London and New York, 1994 (first edition 1989); Breuilly 1993 on East-West differences in state formation (p373) and on "illiberal" nationalism, p396; Gellner, pp97-8 on "classical Habsburg (and points south and east)" in his threefold typology of nationalisms (Habsburg, unification and diaspora), cf. Brendan O'Leary's summary in *On The Nature of Nationalism: An Appraisal of Ernest Gellner's Writings on Nationalism*, in Hall and Jarvie *op. cit.*, pp81-3; Michael Ignatieff's *Benign Nationalism? The Possibilities of the Civic Ideal* and Robert Fines *Benign Nationalism? The Limits of the Civic Ideal*, in *People, Nation and State: The*

verdict of the modernists on nationalism as a child of the eighteenth century, describing it as “a phenomenon peculiar to peoples who share a cosmopolitan and secular culture in which the belief in progress has taken two markedly different forms”.<sup>315</sup> One of these is Western, the other Eastern. The latter flourished amongst the Slavs, as well as in Africa, Asia and Latin America, the appellation an acknowledgement of its place of origin within Europe. For Plamenatz, nationalism, or “the desire to preserve or enhance a people’s national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt to be inadequate or lacking” is primarily cultural, though it can also manifest itself politically.<sup>316</sup> What in the eyes of one people sets them apart from all others is to be found in ways of thinking, feeling and behaving, which they regard as uniquely their own.<sup>317</sup>

Largely as a result of the military and political ascendancy of the French under Napoleon, nationalism, even in the West, became intensely political. The French were formidable, able to impose themselves on others because they had a powerful state, and if other peoples were to keep their independence or to resist excessive French influence, they needed to follow suit. Nevertheless, Plamenatz insists that the

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*Meaning of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, edited by Edward Mortimer with Robert Fine, I.B. Tauris, London and New York, 1999, pp141-8 and 149-161 respectively and Ray Taras in *Liberal and Illiberal Nationalisms*, Palgrave, Macmillan, Houndmills, 2002. Cf. Peter Sugar’s appraisal of Kohn (pp9-11) in *External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism*, in Sugar and Lederer, *op. cit.*, pp3-54 and his own subdivisions of the “Eastern” type, bourgeois, aristocratic, popular and bureaucratic (*op. cit.*, pp46-54). In essence, Michael Billig’s entire approach rejects the civic-ethnic distinction, but a particularly relevant passage is to be found on, pp46-9 of *Banal Nationalism*, where he picks apart Ignatieff’s *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1993.

<sup>314</sup> In: Eugene Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism, The Nature and Evolution of an Idea* (henceforth *Kamenka*), St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1976, pp23-36.

<sup>315</sup> *Kamenka*, p23.

<sup>316</sup> *Kamenka*, pp23-4.

<sup>317</sup> *Kamenka*, p24. In Plamenatz’s view, patriotism, or “devotion to the community one belongs to”, which has existed for as long as there have been communities and national consciousness, or “a lively sense of, and perhaps also pride in, what distinguishes one’s own from other peoples” are distinct from nationalism. The latter “arises when people are aware, not only of cultural diversity, but of cultural change and share some idea of progress which moves them to compare their own achievements and capacities with those of others” (p24).



wish to enhance cultural distinctness remained the driving force behind nationalism in the West.<sup>318</sup> By contrast, even before Napoleon had been heard of, the Germans felt culturally overshadowed by the French, impelled to assert themselves against them. The ideas about man, morals and society associated with France (in reality West European) were widely embraced by the educated, as was the concept of progress, which came to be defined by reference to England and France. For a variety of reasons, these two countries were better placed than other Western nations to elaborate upon these ideas and to apply them. Thus they took on the appearance of being pre-eminently progressive, setting the pace culturally, economically and politically, admired by those who could not match their achievements. Nationalism therefore “is a reaction of peoples who feel culturally at a disadvantage”, under conditions where several peoples are in close contact yet conscious of their separateness, where they share common ideals yet some are further down the road to attaining them.<sup>319</sup> More than simple envy, it is “confined to peoples who, despite their rivalries and the cultural differences between them, already belong to, or are being drawn into, a family of nations which all aspire to make progress in roughly the same directions”.<sup>320</sup>

When they first became nationalist, the Germans and Italians were already well off culturally according to the standards of the nations they measured themselves against. They had languages adapted to the practical and intellectual needs of the civilisation they were part of as well as universities and schools passing on the skills prized within it and philosophers, scientists, artists and poets of European reputation. To put themselves on a par with the English and French they did not have to appropriate what was alien to them. Culturally, they had as much to give as to take. The most pressing issue for them was to obtain national states. The situation of the Slavs was quite different. As Western ideas and practices slowly diffused amongst them, they were pulled irresistably into the orbit of a foreign civilisation, forcing them to undergo a transformation. To stake a claim as equals they had to tackle the problem of lagging behind, further handicapped by the fact that their ancestors had bequeathed

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<sup>318</sup> *Kamenka*, p25.

<sup>319</sup> *Op. cit.*, p27.

<sup>320</sup> As above. As Plamenatz makes clear: “it is broader than the demand (or doctrine) that every nationally conscious people should form a state of their own or at least an autonomous province in a federal state. It is broader than merely political nationalism” (p27).

them insufficient resources for the challenge. Nationalism came to the Slavs from the Germans, stimulating their interest in folklore. Linguists and grammarians, most of whom had studied abroad, were confronted with the twofold task of providing a literary language flexible enough to cope with the demands of modern life whilst respecting and retaining enough of the original dialects to stay true to themselves. The nub of the dilemma was that if they wanted to maintain their separate cultural identity, they had to emulate the foreigners with whom they refused to identify themselves and in so doing loosen their attachments to the old ways.<sup>321</sup>

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as the governance of the Habsburg lands became more centralized and industry and trade grew, many Slavs had to all intents and purposes become German by mastering that tongue in order to make a career, advance socially, accumulate wealth and live in the towns. In the nineteenth century, a powerful resistance to the processes of Germanization and Magyarization took root with the spread of nationalist teachings. Sterility and second-rateness would be the penalty of succumbing to the temptation of straying from the native path. The attractiveness of the doctrine stemmed from the revolution turning societies in which the tightly-knit, tradition-bound and self-supporting village is the most important community into urbanized societies with much greater social mobility and more complex administrations. In the Habsburg context, this was happening under the leadership of peoples having at their disposal languages and cultures relatively well fitted to the new forms of activity at the expense of those who did not.<sup>322</sup>

New opportunities abound for the individual against the backdrop of social change, allowing him to move from the countryside to the city to make his fortune in industry, commerce, one of the professions or in the service of the state. The price to be paid to succeed in this undertaking is renunciation of the speech and manners of the village in favour of those of the new circles he moves in. If this presents him with no great cost, he will stump up willingly. If, however, he sees himself at a great disadvantage and cherishes hopes of removing that disadvantage by combining with fellow sufferers then that is what he will do. Together they will turn their backs on those at the top, demanding that the price be renegotiated.

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<sup>321</sup> *Kamenka*, pp29-31.

<sup>322</sup> *Kamenka*, p32.

As the changes gather speed, competition over the opportunities becomes fiercer and those less well positioned to grasp success are increasingly anxious to close the gap between themselves and their rivals. Acquiring a culture as well tailored to enabling its bearer to make the most of the chances available becomes the most pressing concern, even though this new culture cannot help but copy models from elsewhere.<sup>323</sup>

This brings us full circle with a fuller account of the Western nationalism of the Germans and Italians in the nineteenth century, “the nationalism of peoples who for some reason feel themselves at a disadvantage but who are nevertheless culturally equipped in ways that favour success and excellence measured by standards which are widely accepted and fast spreading, and which first arose among them and peoples culturally akin to them” and its Eastern equivalent, “the nationalism of peoples recently drawn into civilisation hitherto alien to them, and whose ancestral cultures are not adapted to success and excellence by these cosmopolitan and increasingly dominant standards. This is the nationalism of peoples who feel the need to transform themselves, and in so doing to raise themselves; of peoples who come to be called ‘backward’, and who would not be nationalists of this kind unless they both recognised this backwardness and wanted to overcome it”.<sup>324</sup> Plamenatz does not suggest that it is possible to shake off every trace of native cultures or that peoples even attempt to discard them completely. Similarly, no matter how thoroughly the imitation is cultivated, the end product is never quite the same as the original. Catching up is a profoundly disturbing experience, which is precisely why Eastern nationalism is shot through with an ambivalence unknown in the Western variant. Unlike Kohn, Plamenatz does not consider Eastern nationalism as innately illiberal.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> *Kamenka*, pp32-3.

<sup>324</sup> *Kamenka*, pp33-4. Plamenatz does not lump together the different peoples falling under the Eastern category indiscriminately, but is aware that whereas some “are relatively primitive and mostly illiterate”, others “were highly sophisticated long before they became nationalist and ‘progressive’” (p34).

<sup>325</sup> *Kamenka*, p35. He likewise criticises Kedourie for condemning nationalism in general as inherently illiberal on p27. See also pp35-6 where he reviews the liberating side of the efforts of rulers who embark on a course of creating a nation as well as the new kinds of oppression that follow in their wake. Furthermore, on p29 he assesses nationalism in the West in a more nuanced fashion than its more embittered foes. Although it was “not entirely liberal” in the nineteenth century, it was so more often than not, including amongst the Germans and Italians before they had attained political union. In

With his more sensitive stance on the predicament of the materially and culturally less advanced peoples outside of the “core”<sup>326</sup> and his conviction that there is nothing inherently reprehensible about nationalism, Plamenatz offers a more sophisticated analysis than his predecessor Kohn.<sup>327</sup>

### Rogers Brubaker’s Critique

Rogers Brubaker in *The Manichean Myth: Rethinking the Distinction between “Civic” and “Ethnic” Nationalism*<sup>328</sup> contends that the dichotomies in the Kohnian mode derive from the protean quality of nationalism itself.<sup>329</sup> According to the proponents of such classificatory schemes there are only two breeds of nationalism, the civic, with its cluster of positive associations “liberal, voluntarist, universalist and inclusive” and its dark mirror image the ethnic, with its correspondingly negative connotations of the “illiberal, ascriptive, particularist and exclusive”. Each rests on its own understanding of nationhood, the first taking common citizenship as its starting point, the second common ethnicity.<sup>330</sup>

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the twentieth century, it degenerated into the strident illiberalism of Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and the extreme Right-Wingers in France, but this has been “the nationalism of peoples defeated in war or disappointed in victory. It has been the nationalism of peoples already united politically and humiliated or disregarded in spite of this unity”.

<sup>326</sup> On the “core” and “periphery” concepts, see *Ethnic*, p9; Iván Berend and György Ránki’s *The European Periphery and Industrialization 1780-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982 and *The Origins of Backwardness in Eastern Europe*, edited by Daniel Chirot, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989.

<sup>327</sup> For alternative reactions to Plamenatz, see *Smith 1991*, p81 and *Gellner*, pp99-101.

<sup>328</sup> In: Kriesi et al, *op. cit.*, pp55-71, henceforth *Manichean*. Brubaker is also a modernist, as he makes clear in *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1992, p35 (henceforth *Citizenship*), where he dates the genesis of the nation-state to the French Revolution. In his later discussion of its legacy he avails himself of an analogous distinction between benign and malignant strains of nationalism: “The nation-state may, indeed must, discriminate between citizens and foreigners. It is in this sense inherently nationalistic. Its nationalism need not be the aggressive or xenophobic sort of 1792 and after. More often it has a routine, normal, taken-for-granted quality. Both sorts of nationalism – the normal “background” nationalism of the nation-state and the noisy, bellicose variety – descend to us from the French Revolution”. *Op. cit.*, p47.

<sup>329</sup> *Manichean*, p55.

<sup>330</sup> *Manichean*, p56.

Although Kohn projects these in space, the customary usage of the civic-ethnic opposition is in differentiating between states or national movements, often in order to put down an ideological marker, separating the wheat of one's own legitimate, civic nationalism from the chaff of the illegitimate, ethnic nationalism of one's neighbours. Separatist movements invoke the benign civic variety to ward off accusations of intolerance and lay claim to the "normative prestige" and international respectability adhering to it.<sup>331</sup>

Brubaker then goes on to list the analytical weaknesses of the civic-ethnic dividing line, illustrating the deep ambiguities of the terms by exploring how culture can be mapped on to them. The relationship between ethnicity and culture is unclear due to the vagueness and consequent elasticity of ethnicity itself. Ethnic nationalism can be defined narrowly as giving primacy to descent, yet many collectivities whose nationhood is not called into question do not summon up the figure of a common ancestor, and even where imputed descent does feature in argumentation it often plays a minor role. If, however, ethnicity is confined to strict blood kinship, then any rhetoric focusing on shared culture has to be counted as civic nationalism. By the same token, if "ethnic" is expanded to "ethnocultural" then virtually every nationalism can be counted as such.<sup>332</sup>

As a category "civic" is equally problematic. In a more restrictive interpretation its dimensions are acultural, ahistorical, rationalist and universalist with the nation as "a voluntary association of culturally unmarked individuals".<sup>333</sup> Even France and the United States, those much-vaunted paradigms of civic nationalism, have a sense of peoplehood. A purely acultural understanding of nationalism suffers from certain deficiencies even as an ideal type. In Brubaker's reading, Ernest Renan's famous metaphor of the nation as a "daily plebiscite" was intended merely as a "rhetorical flourish" to highlight the importance of subjective self-understanding in constituting nationhood, but Renan did not neglect cultural aspects, specifically mentioning the possession of a legacy of memories and a long past of endeavours, sacrifice and devotion.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp57-8.

<sup>332</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp59-60.

<sup>333</sup> *Op. cit.*, p61.

<sup>334</sup> *Manichean*, p61. In his stimulating *The Myth of the Civic Nation*, p198, Bernard Yack reproduces the Renan quote in greater detail, elucidating that "the subject of that plebiscite is what we will do with

Brubaker turns to Keating's definition of civic nationalism by way of an exemplar of the broader way of approaching the phenomenon. In Keating's words:

"It is a collective enterprise of its members but is rooted in individual assent rather than ascriptive identity. It is based on common values and institutions, and patterns of social interaction. The bearers of national identity are institutions, customs, historical memories and rational/ secular values. Anyone can join the nation irrespective of birth or ethnic origins; though the cost of adaptation varies. There is no myth of common ancestry. Civic nationalism is based upon territorially defined community, not upon a social boundary among groups within a territory. This is not to say that any piece of real estate can form the basis for a nationalism. There need to be a structured set of political and social interactions guided by common values and a sense of common identity (...). Civic nationalism tends to start from the individual and build to the nation rather than deriving individual rights and duties from common nationality. The bearer of nationality may be the state itself, in those cases where the state preceded the nation and based its founding doctrine on civic principles. In other cases, where the nation does not have its own state, national identity may be borne by institutions and practices in the civil society and shared values to which all can adhere.

Nations in the civic vision are further distinguished from ethnic groups in being global societies, containing within them the full range of social institutions and mechanisms for social regulation. People within the nation do not need to share social customs, habits or ways of thinking; rather nationality is common to them in the way a table is to a group of diners".<sup>335</sup>

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the mix of competing symbols and stories that make up our cultural inheritance". The article appears in: *Critical Review*, 1996, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp193-211.

<sup>335</sup> Michael Keating, *Nations Against the State: The New Politics of Nationalism in Quebec, Catalonia and Scotland*, St. Martins Press, New York, 1996, pp5-6. In contrasting civic and ethnic nationalisms, Keating does not pretend that all is rosy in the civic garden: "Civic nationalism can be violent and (...) civic values may be narrow and intolerantly applied. It is in their doctrine, the bases of their appeal and the strategy for nation-building that they differ", *op. cit.*, p7.

The difficulty here is that Keating wants to have his cake and eat it, lumping together choice and a range of the cultural features routinely appropriated by the “ethnic” camp.<sup>336</sup>

In order to shed further light on the dilemmas raised, language policy is addressed. Promoting one language at provincial or state level can be praised as an indispensable step towards equality and the bedrock of republican citizenship, abolishing barriers to communication and opening access to public office. Making citizenship conditional upon fluency and adopting legislation on teaching, publishing or broadcasting in a given language are often held up as classical hallmarks of ethnic nationalism. Thus the identical activity of encouraging the use of one language at the expense of others can fall into either category, revealing the inadequacy of the civic-ethnic distinction.<sup>337</sup>

Brubaker then goes back to Kohn to examine the normative function performed by the contrast, showing how the latter’s neutral observations on the subject of the predominantly political nature of Western nationalism were interspersed with value judgements lauding liberty and cosmopolitanism followed by lengthy denunciations of the illiberal tendencies of the East.<sup>338</sup> Kohn’s later imitators have followed in his footsteps in this respect as well: “When civic and ethnic nationalism are paired, the former is invariably a term of praise, the latter a term of abuse”.<sup>339</sup>

Returning to his earlier work *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*,<sup>340</sup> Brubaker convincingly refutes the proposition that civic nationalism is inclusive whilst ethnic is exclusive. As he indicates all forms of nationalism (and I would add all identities) are simultaneously inclusive and exclusive: what varies are the criteria of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>341</sup>

The civic version of nationhood is conventionally glossed as inclusive for two reasons, firstly because it is based on citizenship and extends to all citizens regardless of their extraction, skin colour, cultural affinities and so on. By its very nature,

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<sup>336</sup> *Manichean*, p62. Indeed, Brubaker demonstrates their affinity with Smith’s “myths, memories, values and symbols”.

<sup>337</sup> *Manichean*, pp62-3.

<sup>338</sup> *Manichean*, p63.

<sup>339</sup> *Manichean*, p64.

<sup>340</sup> See footnote 328 above for bibliographical details.

<sup>341</sup> *Manichean*, p64.

however, citizenship is an instrument of social closure, a concept elaborated by Max Weber in *Economy and Society*.<sup>342</sup> Frontiers with their checkpoints and passport controls, immigration services and the like are embodiments of such closure. Even naturalisation, which governs admission to the status of citizen, is out of bounds to the unqualified, making citizenship the object of closure as well,<sup>343</sup> likened by Brubaker to an international filing system for allocating persons to states.<sup>344</sup>

Sociological analysis of the state has focused on the transition from the medieval polity, as a network of persons, to the modern form of territorialized rule, leaving “the division of the world’s population into a set of bounded and mutually exclusive citizenries” obscure.<sup>345</sup> Current administrative practice centres on regulating access to political territory thereby presupposing membership since it must have some means at its disposal to tell apart those who belong to the state from those who do not. Tangible material provisions are at stake given that welfare benefits, access to labour markets and a plethora of other opportunities are only open to citizens.<sup>346</sup> Furthermore, virtually all modern states subscribe to the doctrine of popular sovereignty, deriving their power from and wielding it on behalf of a nation, with the avowed intention of furthering its interests. The routine barring of non-citizens from suffrage, military service and posts in public administration has been and continues to be sanctioned by reference to these principles.<sup>347</sup>

Outsiders or ineligibles must be categorised and recognised if closure is to be enforced. They may be classed residually, as non-members, or directly, as possessing some disqualifying attribute. The scope and time span of the insider-outsider grouping may vary, at one extreme ad hoc and ephemeral, tied to a particular, fleeting interaction and strictly context-bound, at the other crystallising into a more structured segment of the populace, persisting over time and actualised across a range of

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<sup>342</sup> Manichean, p64. *Economy and Society*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978, pp43-46 and 341-343.

<sup>343</sup> *Citizenship*, pp22-3.

<sup>344</sup> *Op. cit.*, p31. In theory nobody is left out because the entire habitable land mass of the globe is divided into states.

<sup>345</sup> *Citizenship*, p22.

<sup>346</sup> Or, as far as remunerated employment is concerned, those having been awarded a work permit. *Op. cit.*, p24.

<sup>347</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp28-9.



interactions relatively independent of context. Being a citizen is “to be defined in a general, abstract, enduring and context-independent way as a member of the state”.<sup>348</sup> Rather than being the object of a tacit, internalised body of knowledge, this definition is formally codified in law in accordance with agreed standards, monitored and regulated by officials within an apparatus devised expressly for the purpose of ensuring that the rules instituting and maintaining closure are respected.<sup>349</sup>

The second reason for dubbing civic nationalism inclusive is that it accepts as its own anyone willing to adopt and live by a given political creed. Kohn and others<sup>350</sup> have regarded America as the paragon of virtue from this perspective, although the historical accuracy of such a resounding endorsement has come under fire.<sup>351</sup> Brubaker adduces the grotesque spectacle of the McCarthy witch hunts to reveal that the creed-based model of membership has its own brand of exclusion before issuing a reminder that even in Germany Catholics and Social Democrats were ostracised from the moral community of the nation during the Bismarck era, written off as enemies of the state because their lack of loyalty towards it was assumed.<sup>352</sup>

In drawing to a close, Brubaker briefly deals with three further arguments, which challenge the normative content of the civic-ethnic distinction: the relevance of choice (in contrast to compulsion) in deciding which nation to be part of even in settings where ethnic nationalism predominates; the communitarian critique of liberalism, which has enhanced appreciation of the cultural contexts forming the backdrop to choice; and multiculturalism, which not only assigns value to ethnic or ethnocultural identities, but also sees public recognition of them as supportive of rather than

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<sup>348</sup> *Op. cit.*, p29.

<sup>349</sup> *Op. cit.*, p30.

<sup>350</sup> For example Philip Gleason, *American Identity and Americanization*, in: *Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups*, edited by Stephan Thernstrom, Ann Orlov and Oscar Handlin, Cambridge Massachusetts, Belknap Press, 1980, pp31-58. On p32 he states the case succinctly: „To be or become an American, a person did not have to be of any particular national, linguistic, religious, or ethnic background. All he had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology-centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality, and republicanism. Thus the universalist ideological character of American nationality meant that it was open to anyone who willed to become an American”.

<sup>351</sup> Brubaker mentions Rogers Smith’s *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1997 as hostile to the unashamedly optimistic view.

<sup>352</sup> *Manichean*, p65.

inimical to citizenship.<sup>353</sup> In its place he recommends a differentiation between state-framed and counter-state nationalisms: "In the former, "nation" is conceived as congruent with the state, and as institutionally and territorially framed by it. In the latter "nation" is imagined as distinct from and often in opposition to, the territorial and institutional frame of an existing state or states"<sup>354</sup>

In Brubaker's estimation the advantage of this alternative is that it does not set up an antithesis between state-framed nationhood and ethnicity or culture, permitting a more nuanced treatment of language and other phenomena. Similarly, counter-state nationalisms need not be specifically ethnic, but could equally be based on territory, enjoyment of centuries old privileges or a separate political history prior to absorption into a larger state.<sup>355</sup>

Although the differences pinpointed by Kohn do exist, they do not depend on geography so much as the nature of the society in which they finds expression.<sup>356</sup> The principle of classification is always the same in that it provides a criterion of inclusion and exclusion ("us" and "them", the national and the non-national). What varies is how this principle is applied: the specific interpretative slant given to it is contingent upon each society and its fund of political and historical experience. Under Herder's influence, the later nationalisms did indeed give greater prominence to "essence", as expressed through language because they did not already possess states of their own. In this respect, Kohn confuses "backwardness" with fundamental primitivism. Brubaker's discussion of citizenship provides a salutary reminder that exclusion is not the preserve of "illiberal" nationalism.<sup>357</sup> Entrenched conflicts over the "title-deeds"

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<sup>353</sup> *Manichean*, pp66-7.

<sup>354</sup> *Op. cit.*, p67.

<sup>355</sup> *Op. cit.*, p68. He adds on the following page that even if, as with Scotland or Catalonia, the nation is circumscribed in cultural or ethnic terms it may retain a „civic" bias. Three further articles of interest on the civic-ethnic dichotomy and upon which Brubaker draws are: Bernard Yack, *op. cit.* (reprinted in *Theorizing Nationalism*, edited by Ronald Beiner, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1999, pp103-118); Nicholas Xenos' *Civic Nationalism: Oxymoron?* likewise in *Critical Review*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp213-231 and Raymond Breton's *From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism: English Canada and Quebec*, in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 1998, Vol. 11, No.1, pp85-102.

<sup>356</sup> I would agree with Plamenatz that timing of exposure to the ideals of nationalism was crucial.

<sup>357</sup> I am not trying to suggest that Kohn's body of work is without value for today's scholars of nationalism. On the contrary, I concur with him on several issues, such as his characterization of

to territory are likely to poison relations within and between communities thereby releasing the negative potential of the classification.<sup>358</sup>

The question of the origins of nationalism is not explicitly addressed in what follows partly due to the fact that the specific historical example selected for investigation is located in a context within which nationhood had already become embedded in the popular consciousness as the dominant principle of classification with all the connotations of normality and venerability thereby implied, partly due to the focus upon the function of nationhood and nationalism as the doctrine articulating it as a principle of classification as well as upon its operation at a cognitive level.<sup>359</sup> As indicated a moment ago, the variety of nationalisms which flourish, far from being enigmatic, must be viewed in terms of differences in emphasis in turn attributable to the needs, value-systems, culture and perceptions of different societies (the social tropes). From Guibernau I take on board the idea that possession of a sovereign state is not an indispensable prerequisite for a national consciousness.<sup>360</sup> With Gellner I

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nationalism as "a psychological and social fact" (Idea, pp10-13). For further assessments of Kohn, see Özkirimli, pp36, 41-3, and 61-2; Smith's *Nationalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001, pp39-42, *Myths*, pp36-7, *Global*, pp77-83, *Smith 1998*, pp17 and 146 and *Smith 1991*, pp80-1; Breuilly 1993, pp12-3; Tom Nairn in *Faces of Nationalism: Janus Revisited*, Verso, London, 1997, pp59-60, 63, 65 and 109; George Schöpflin in *Nations, Identity, Power*, Hurst and Company, London, 2000, pp4-5; Guibernau, p48; Rogers Brubaker's *Myths and misconceptions in the study of nationalism* in John A. Hall (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp272-306 (particularly pp281-5); John Hutchinson's *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1987, pp8-47, where he outlines his concept of cultural nationalism and pp31-3 specifically on Kohn and his *Modern Nationalism*, pp48-51 and, in greater depth than any of the aforementioned, Aira Kemiläinen's *Nationalism, Problems Concerning the Word, the Concept and Classification*, Kustantajat Publishers, Jyväskylä, 1964, pp111-142, pp190-207 for a comparison between Kohn and Hayes, pp224-230 for concluding remarks and pp235-7 for Snyder's outline of the Kohn dichotomy.

<sup>358</sup> As we shall see in the dispute between Hungary and Romania over Transylvania. Another way of putting this would be to talk of background „civic” nationalism degenerating into strident „ethnic” hatred.

<sup>359</sup> Cf. Breuilly, in the *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism*, Volume One, Editor-in-Chief Alexander J. Motyl, Academic Press, San Diego, 2001, p784: "By 1918 the nation-state was the accepted model for political organization in Europe and areas of white settlement beyond Europe. The Wilsonian Principles made it clear that those seeking to establish successor states in the territories of the defeated powers would have to justify this in national terms". See also *op. cit.*, pp790-1.

<sup>360</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp47-8.

hold that the concept of the nation as we know it today is indeed a product of modern times, although like Smith I do not believe that it was miraculously conjured out of thin air with no antecedents or that it has been immanent throughout all human dealings. The cognitive aspects, which my theory adds, derive from the proposition that nationalism embodies the principle of classification based on nationhood, subtly pervades our thinking in a myriad of ways.<sup>361</sup> Our lives are shaped and ordered by it, colouring our perceptions of reality. Since it is held to conform to a feature of external reality, in other words nature itself,<sup>362</sup> it drops out of sight into the realm of the self-evident where it holds sway unchallenged. The national principle of classification accords primary importance to the identity, which it generates and which also upholds it, rendering it tangible to the individual, whilst at the same time the representations that appear most convincing due to the espousal of the principle of classification help to solidify it further. Thus principle of classification, identity and representations of identity sustain each other in a mutually reinforcing relationship.<sup>363</sup> One further crucial feature of principles of classification is their effect on what Pierre Bourdieu has termed the field of cultural production.<sup>364</sup> Although Bourdieu restricts his penetrating analysis to art, literature and aesthetics his model of change arising from competing position-takings on the part of artists can be extended to the output of intellectuals in general. I therefore apply his ideas to the generation of knowledge and values whilst contending that the principle of classification acts as a background

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<sup>361</sup> Cf. Billig. The technique of analysing representations in order to apprehend underlying structures of meaning I owe to him.

<sup>362</sup> Cf. Douglas, *Implicit Meanings* and *How Institutions Think*; Bourdieu in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* and Kohn in *Idea*, who writes that rapid population growth, education for all and new techniques in information and propaganda have been instrumental in giving "the new feeling of nationality a permanent intensity which soon made it appear as the expression of something 'natural', of something which had always existed and would always exist" (p21).

<sup>363</sup> To reiterate: according to this view, distinctive notions of identity preceded the national principle of classification, the new classification drew on these whilst creating its own identity, giving rise to new representations concerning the significance of the national identity, which in turn modified the older ideas of what constitutes identity in general. None of this occurs in a vacuum and the role played by institutions in the process will be discussed later.

<sup>364</sup> In his brilliant collection of essays of the same title, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993 (henceforth, *Field*).

filter<sup>365</sup>, suggesting what knowledge is "worthwhile" as well as roughly outlining its contents. Representations, whether institutionalised as such (for example artefacts arranged to convey information in accordance with expert interpretations of their meaning in museums,<sup>366</sup> paintings put on show for sale in galleries or advertisements on hoardings) or claiming scientific neutrality (history being the most pertinent), are imbued with its preferences and shore it up. That this way of conceptualising the relationship between knowledge and underlying principles does not preclude change becomes clear from the internal dynamics of the field with each new position-taking displacing its predecessors. At the same time, cognitive dissonance remains a constant danger threatening to jolt the principle of classification from the doxa, such as in instances where glaring discrepancies between espoused political aims and their application in practice can no longer be ignored.<sup>367</sup>

Far from being static, identity is dynamic and capable of evolving over time, albeit slowly, as it incorporates and adapts to new ideas. Given that identity is far from immune to the impact of more general developments within society, influenced by accepted representations; it is therefore legitimate to talk of a history of identity. Indeed our current understanding of identity is not only the result of a long tradition of thought from the very dawn of European philosophy,<sup>368</sup> but will inevitably also be superseded. In keeping with the social constructionist school,<sup>369</sup> I propose that the

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<sup>365</sup> In democracies. The more overt enforcement of the principle of classification under Communism is handled separately.

<sup>366</sup> For a useful illustration see Henrietta Lidchi's essay *The Poetics and Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures* in Stuart Hall (editor), *Representation, Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Sage, London, 1997, pp151-222.

<sup>367</sup> For the definition of doxa, see Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, pp164-171 and Chapter One. On cognitive dissonance, cf. also David Kertzer, in *Ritual, Politics and Power*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1988 (henceforth *Kertzer*), pp97-8.

<sup>368</sup> Cf. Charles Taylor who in his *Sources of the Self, The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, traces the lineage of the idea from Plato through St. Augustine and the Enlightenment to our contemporary dilemmas.

<sup>369</sup> The original statement of the social constructionist theory is to be found *Construction* (for bibliographical details, see footnote 127, p35 above). Since then, it has been refined and has branched out into different fields. See Vivien Burr, *An Introduction to Social Construction*, Routledge, London, 1995; Kenneth J. Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, Sage, London, 1999 and, by the same author, *An Invitation to Social Construction*, Sage, London, 1999.

tenets of individualism have obscured the social component of identity<sup>370</sup> with all the attendant problems of discrepancies between self-definition on the part of an individual or collectivity (internal definitions) and external definitions emanating from surrounding groups or collectivities. Struggles over the right to define a collectivity and over which definition is indeed authentic become particularly acute where they are bound up with power imbalances in society as a whole and minorities are therefore particularly vulnerable to having unwanted definitions (prejudices, stereotypes) imposed upon them. That this holds true not only of national minorities can be seen from the proliferation of movements organised to reclaim identities, such as gay pride.<sup>371</sup>

In order to comprehend more fully why nationalism possesses the cognitive persuasiveness that it does, it is vital to examine identity more closely. I posit that various layers of identity may be distinguished between. The bedrock of our selves, the core from which our perceptions of who we are derive, I term material identity. It is characterised by its solidity, its ineluctability, an impression corroborated by our socialisation and comprises fundamental and immediately visible markers such as gender and skin colour, which are saturated with social meanings as well as cultural identity, equally salient and owned, whereby the literally material components (artefacts) and the non-material (habitus, language) are reciprocally potentiating. The other identities, categorised as functional, affective and circumstantial, are less important at this juncture.<sup>372</sup> Under nationalism, the principle of classification founded on nationhood is applied in such a way that national identity (the outward expression of cultural difference, frequently associated with territorially bounded administrative units in the form of states, though this is not a *sine qua non*) is invested with a material quality, in other words that national identity represents a material difference between members of the nation and outsiders (cultural difference conflated

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<sup>370</sup> For an excellent discussion of the problem, see *Jenkins*, pp14-28.

<sup>371</sup> For analyses of latter day identity-orientated activism see Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1997, henceforth *Castells*. He also speaks of a plurality of identities, differentiating between legitimizing identity that sanctioned and fostered by the dominant institutions, resistance identity, that of the stigmatised minority constructed in opposition to the foregoing and project identity, a redefinition designed not only to improve the social position of its holders, but also to re-weave the fabric of society itself. *Castells*, pp6-10.

<sup>372</sup> For a full statement of what they entail see Chapter One below.

with material "essence"). As regards their function principles of classification are always identical in that they draw boundaries between "us" and "them", here separating those who belong to the nation and those who do not.<sup>373</sup> The permeability of these boundaries is not inscribed in the principle of classification itself, however, but is strictly context-determined according to the values of each society and the relative importance attached to kindred concepts such as nationality, ethnicity and race.<sup>374</sup>

Echoing Brubaker, this becomes clear where families or larger, more loosely configured groups migrate and are required to undergo a rite of passage, whether this consist of a citizenship examination, demonstrating knowledge of the laws of the land or proficiency in its language or simply the elapsing of a period of residence during which the candidate is assumed to have adapted to the new environment, has not transgressed against law and order and has, ideally at least, made a constructive (and productive) contribution to the host society before they are officially embraced into the ranks of "naturalised" citizens. Formal administrative recognition of the new status is thus made contingent upon proof of fitness. That nationality has to be earned and is bestowed solely upon the deserving is a belief upheld by state bureaucracies the world over.

It may be objected that civic nationalism, such as exists in America to name but one example, negates the proposition that materiality, an irreducible difference between the collectivity in question and all others, is the message nationalism preaches. After all, anyone can become an American as long as they share in the great dream of liberty and the pursuit of happiness with the United States exerting a magnetic pull on the downtrodden and oppressed and priding itself on giving them shelter and succour. Yet even here a new identity is "assumed" (layered over the old) after the probationary period: a transformation still takes place (immigrant to fully-fledged citizen). The significance of blood origin (kinship metaphors, ethnicity) is downplayed, with the qualitative (material) difference residing in the allegiance and unswerving devotion to the values enshrined in the constitution. There is no

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<sup>373</sup> The principle does not, however, prescribe in detail what the doctrine should claim as desirable or appropriate, which is the reason why a variety of nationalisms are possible in line with my argument concerning contextuality.

<sup>374</sup> Indeed, a racist will never accept someone of a darker complexion or foreign accent as truly melding with the national community.

requirement to relinquish the former identity in entirety, but it must be modified to a sufficient extent as to merit outside endorsement.<sup>375</sup> The constitutional values themselves assume the function of boundary marker in place of blood ties.<sup>376</sup> What we observe therefore is not an absence or denial of material transformation, but a difference in emphasis in favour of greater inclusiveness. "Ethnic" nationalism with its less yielding boundaries refuses to admit that such mutations are possible and in the case study of the Hungarian minority in Transylvania it is precisely this exclusionist strain that is the key to the ongoing conflict.<sup>377</sup>

That nationalism has not lacked rivals in presenting itself as the paragon of expediency emerges from the experience of Communism in Romania and Hungary. Many commentators have remarked upon the apparent failure by Marx to recognise the importance of nationalism in his humanitarian project to overcome the evils of exploitation and oppression.<sup>378</sup> I briefly review the works of Ephraim Nimni and Roman Szporluk on the relationship between Marxism and nationalism, which challenge conventional thinking on the subject and of Walker Connor on Marxist-Leninist strategies.<sup>379</sup>

Whatever the merits or demerits of Marxism as an ideology I by contrast consider the Communist experiments in Hungary and Romania from the vantage point of the structural homology that exists between them and nationalism in terms of their function as principles of classification precipitating new identities and moulding

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<sup>375</sup> The effectiveness of the incorporation procedure is not relevant, merely the fact that a transformation, that is a material change, is both presupposed and demanded. On the American case, see Hobsbawm's *Invention*, pp279-280.

<sup>376</sup> "Spiritual" kinship substitutes for "blood" kinship, the members of the nation united by shared beliefs. On a subjective level, geographical distance facilitates the acceptance that a new state of being has been entered with the crossing of frontiers and assumption of the new status.

<sup>377</sup> Here I have used the term for the sake of convenience. To translate it into my own, in instances where the nationalist principle of classification accords primacy to blood or "spiritual" ties, the degree of exclusion becomes correspondingly greater. Cf. Sugar and Lederer *op. cit.*, p20.

<sup>378</sup> Such as listed for example in Ronaldo Munck, *The Difficult Dialogue*, Zed Books, London, 1986 (henceforth *Munck*), p2. Cf. Ephraim Nimni, *Marxism and Nationalism*, Pluto Press, London, 1994 (originally 1991, henceforth *Nimni*), pp4-6, 17, 41-2 and 186.

<sup>379</sup> For bibliographical details on Szporluk see footnote 65, p23 above and Nimni see footnote 55, p21 above, and Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1984, henceforth *Connor*, respectively.



social realities to fit their image of rational organisation with the attendant representations pertaining to both. Certain of the more overtly repressive practices of Communism such as the need for control of representations through censorship and the containment of dissent can be attributed to this feature. The urgency with which the establishment of a monopoly on virtue, legitimacy and knowledge was pursued was fuelled by the awareness that nationalism had reigned supreme over hearts and minds. After all, when the Communists engineered their takeovers they did so against a backdrop where nationalism was the dominant principle of classification, the nation was seen as the "natural" unit to be governed and states could boast a distinguished pedigree on that basis.<sup>380</sup> The new rulers did not attempt to abolish the state frontiers, nor did they eradicate symbols of national identity altogether, preferring to harness the emotional attachment accruing to membership of the collectivity as a source of strength it would otherwise have lacked. The balance struck between asserting Communism's supremacy and moral superiority (nationalism was demonised as the cause of war, strife and genocide, its ordering, cohesion and solidarity-promoting aspects assiduously overlooked) and cultivating patriotism to the greater exaltation of the national Party was a delicate one.<sup>381</sup> In Romania under Ceauşescu all pretence at keeping a tight rein on national sentiment was dropped with disastrous results for the Hungarian minority.

## ***II Sources***

Access to the cognitive shifts brought about (or intended to be accomplished) by the supplanting of one principle of classification by another at social level can best be secured by an analysis of representations. In their role of presenting definitions (reiterating received wisdom or issuing a direct challenge to orthodoxy) and reaffirming and consolidating the dominant principle of classification, representations are the very stuff of identity, the instrument by which it is reproduced and

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<sup>380</sup> For the psychological effects of a dominant principle of classification see Chapter One and cf.

*Billig*, pp8-10, 15-19, 29, 37, 51-5 and 103.

<sup>381</sup> The reluctance to renounce the national principle of classification unequivocally could be taken as a tacit admission of its legitimacy and relevance.

renegotiated, lending consistency to lived reality.<sup>382</sup> Even where representations run directly counter to the common sense appreciations prompted by the principle of classification they still take that principle as their starting point. Whereas academic history stakes its claim to prestige as a branch of serious scientific enquiry on a staunch defence of its objectivity it nevertheless remains inextricably entangled with the principle of classification, is deeply implicated in upholding the prevailing value-system and can therefore be included within the category of representations, which is not to repudiate the rigour that hallmarks the work of professional historians with consultation of sources or that some facts may be more readily substantiated than others.<sup>383</sup>

Representations therefore may be defined as motivated statements about or depictions of a social reality (or specific aspects thereof), which are simultaneously constitutive of it, in relation to a presupposed collectivity (audience or target group), seeking to influence thought (and often provoke debate), either with a view to maintaining existing classifications or to subvert or overthrow them.<sup>384</sup>

Representations are neither objective nor value-neutral, but involve position-takings within the wider sphere of public discourse and are largely the preserve of intellectuals and politicians.<sup>385</sup> They always come into being with a distinct agenda, a

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<sup>382</sup> In spite of being portrayed as material, national identity in common with all forms of collective identity must be renewed and refreshed at regular intervals, its content replenished and the heartstrings tugged by reminders such as anthems played on public occasions. Cf. Durkheim *Elementary* (bibliographical details in footnote 127, p35 above), pp211-2, 217-8, 379, 382-7, 390-1, 403-5, 429; Kertzer (bibliographical details in footnote 367, p88), pp8-14, 29-34, 37-42, 51, 54-6, 61-9, 73-6 and 99-101; Zdzisław Mach's *Symbols, Conflict, and Identity*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1993 and cf. Guibernau, pp73-4 and 80-4. On the importance of addressing the specific content of nationalist representations, see Szporluk, p164.

<sup>383</sup> History is not being unfairly singled out for "demotion", as the same "accusations" could be levelled against sociology or the natural sciences given that all knowledge is a product of its particular time. See Chapter One and Chris Lorenz, *Konstruktion der Vergangenheit*, Böhlau Verlag, Wien, 1997, pp22-38, 38-47 and 367-414.

<sup>384</sup> Cf. Serge Moscovici, *Social Representations*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, particularly *The Phenomenon of Social Representations* on pp18-77.

<sup>385</sup> The output of advertising industry gurus, artists, film directors and other adepts of non-written representations are excluded from the following partly due to space constraints and partly because they do not wear their intentions on their sleeves to the same extent as authors declaring themselves openly to be addressing the matter of the fate of the nation and/or the minority. The interest and pertinence of

practical purpose or goal to be attained and in this respect differ from "pure" works of art, which directly cash in on their pretence of disinterestedness to accumulate cultural capital (historians will no doubt vehemently disavow that they are in the business of manufacturing representations). Consequently their validity must be tested according to their success in sustaining identities, in reproducing culture (or for that matter triggering a paradigm shift).<sup>386</sup> Nor can they be dealt with in isolation from the intellectual heritage that preceded them, the soil in which they are rooted.<sup>387</sup> Musings on national character, for example, far from being the quaint and whimsical preoccupations of a bygone age form an integral part of an uninterrupted and ongoing process of preserving and updating (adapting to the ceaseless flow of circumstances) of an established identity.

Representations themselves make up primary sources and their nature as contributions to a discourse means that they were tailored for public consumption (as opposed to diaries, government circulars and the like). Hence archival material has not been consulted.<sup>388</sup> In the light of their status as outlined above and in the absence of a systematic treatment of them from a theoretical perspective (compounded by their unavailability in English-language translation) I feel that reproducing representations

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alternatives to written representations is demonstrated by Klüti who touches upon the dance house movement, which juxtaposed its own distinctive vision of the purity of Transylvanian identity with its pallid *anyaország* workaday counterpart, protesting against the latter by celebrating the rich musical heritage of ballads and folk dances from beyond the divide of the frontier. *Borderland*, pp137-164.

<sup>386</sup> This means of accounting for why theories rise to prominence and eventually fall from grace originated in Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962.

<sup>387</sup> Sorin Mitu, whose approach is also based on the critical appraisal of representations, aptly writes on the dilemmas faced by both the historian and the social scientist in his *National Identity of Romanians in Transylvania* (Central European University Press, Budapest, 2001, henceforth *Mitu*): "Text analysis is, obviously, the main technique used in this work. Yet, the risk was run of remaining too poorly equipped in face of a discourse thus divorced from the context of social action that generated it, alienated from the live presence of the people who contributed to its validation. (...) I believe that the historian too, can develop a sensitive relationship with the characters of his inquiry, unravel traces of their presence that are still alive, and thus establish a more direct dialogue with their value systems" (p10).

<sup>388</sup> Although archival sources could usefully complement the work carried out here by showing the extent to which the representations and the principle of classification they support had been internalised.

of Hungarian identity at length is acceptable, all the more so since it is preferable to make a first-hand acquaintance with the vocabulary and substance<sup>389</sup> rather than via a summary, however competent.<sup>390</sup>

A brief sketch of the criteria availed of in selecting sources will highlight further the contextuality of representations and knowledge.

As far as the background texts on Hungarian (*anyaországi*, pre-Trianon) identity are concerned, I have not made a random sample of the rich seam available, but instead concentrated on those, which proved the most influential at the time, which cemented themselves in the Hungarian collective consciousness by becoming an integral part of the canon (the revered body of knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through teaching in educational establishments and seldom out of print). Here we are looking at "official" history, "respectable" narratives of the past, in sum the fruits of the labour of the most eminent intellectuals (the closest we can come to objectivity) or to call them by another name, members of the historical establishment. By virtue of setting out the conventional interpretative framework for the processing of raw facts these accounts reveal the assumptions subsumed within subsequent representations (as indicated, the histories themselves belong to that category) and hence the perimeters of the field.<sup>391</sup>

In the wake of the failures of the Aster<sup>392</sup> and Communist revolutions<sup>393</sup> the political landscape of the interwar years was dominated by the right, two of the Prime

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<sup>389</sup> Admittedly, no translation can ever provide a perfect rendition. This dilemma is familiar to linguists endeavouring to transpose ideas from one context to another where often no one to one correspondence between cultural concepts exists.

<sup>390</sup> This has the added advantage of paring the interference of an intermediary to the bare minimum, reducing the amount of distortion when giving the original writers a voice. Cf. Lorenz, *op. cit.*, pp89-188.

<sup>391</sup> Although relatively little was known about the origins of the Hungarian people this did not dampen the speculative ardour of authors content to draw inspiration from the archaeological remains unearthed. Myth and history intertwine in a colourful tapestry of conclusions concerning the lifestyle, morals and social mores of the ancestors, József being a typical example of this tendency to blend fact with fiction.

<sup>392</sup> With Count Mihály Károlyi (who favoured severance of Hungary's connections to Austria and Germany, the conclusion of a separate peace, the introduction of social and political reforms and concessions to the nationalities) at its head, the *Őszirózsás Forradalom* (or Aster/Frostflower Revolution) began on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1918 following the creation five days earlier of a counter-government in opposition to István Tisza, calling itself the Hungarian National Council and comprising

Ministers, István Bethlen and Pál Teleki, scions of the Transylvanian landowning nobility.<sup>394</sup> The Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1920, which had stripped Hungary of two-thirds of its former territory (excluding Croatia, with Romania alone receiving 103,093 km<sup>2</sup>), sixty per cent of its population (including thirty per cent ethnic Hungarians, reducing almost 3.2 million to minority status in compact blocs contiguous with Hungary), left the country dependent on exports and imports and hence vulnerable to shockwaves in the world economy. On the day of the signing, hundreds of thousands protested against it on the streets of Budapest, to no avail.<sup>395</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Treaty dominated the Hungarian political landscape between the World Wars and beyond. In the words of historian Lajos Kontler: “The tragedy of the

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a coalition supported by three parties, the Social Democrats, the Károlyi Party and Oszkár Jászi's Radical Party. Its first act had been to issue a proclamation containing twelve points, modelled on the March 1848 Proclamation of the Hungarian Revolution and written by Jászi. On the 31<sup>st</sup> Tisza was assassinated and Károlyi sworn in as official Prime Minister. For more detailed accounts, see Peter Pastor's *Hungary between Wilson and Lenin: The Hungarian Revolution of 1918-1919 and the Big Three*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1976, pp21-47; C.A. Macartney's *Hungary: A Short History*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1962, pp203-5; Jörg Hoensch's *A History of Modern Hungary 1867-1994*, Second Edition, Longman, London, 1996, pp85-92; *Molnár*, pp250-3; *Kontler*, pp328-334; *A History of Hungary*, edited by Peter Sugar, Péter Hanák and Tibor Frank (henceforth *Sugar 1994*), Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994, pp295-303; Konrád Salamon, *Nemzeti önpusztítás 1918-20* (henceforth *Salamon*), Korona kiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp39-78 and Ignác Romsics, *Magyarország története a XX. században*, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2000 (henceforth *Romsics 2000*), pp110-121.

<sup>393</sup> The day after Károlyi's resignation as President of the Republic on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1919, Béla Kun proclaimed a dictatorship of the proletariat. See Pastor, *op.cit.*, pp140-7; Macartney, *op.cit.*, p205; Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp92-8; *Molnár*, pp254-261; *Kontler*, pp334-9; *Sugar 1994*, pp303-9; *Salamon*, pp88-174 and *Romsics 2000*, pp121-130.

<sup>394</sup> Cf. *Kontler*, p345. Bethlen's Debrecen speech in 1928, marking the official adoption of revisionism as a policy aim of the government (*Romsics 2000*, p235), and the oration before the Royal Foreign Affairs Society (see Chapter Two) stand out as the most famous political representations of their era calling for the restoration of Transylvania to the Hungarian homeland.

<sup>395</sup> *Romsics 2000*, p146; *Kontler*, pp342-4 and Macartney, *op. cit.*, pp206-7 and pp210-213 on the dire economic straits Hungary was plunged into. On the latter, see also Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp104 and 124-6 and György Ránki's essay in *Sugar 1994*, pp356-67. Statistics concerning Hungary's losses as a result of Trianon can be found in *Romsics 2000*, pp143-5; *Molnár*, p262 and Hoensch, *op. cit.*, p103. For the full text of Law XXXIII of 1921 implementing the provisions of the Treaty, see *Trianon*, edited by Miklós Zeidler, Osiris, Budapest, 2003 (henceforth *Trianon*), pp166-296.

aftermath of the First World War and the Peace Treaty of Trianon consists, far more than merely putting the seal on the unavoidable, in the fact that it contributed to the survival of socio-political structures which had steered the country towards the war and its consequences. Hungarian national consciousness was tailored to the reality of a medium-sized state of twenty, in far-flung dreams even thirty million inhabitants in which Magyar primacy was based not on the vulgar principles of statistical majority and racial identity but on historical and political achievement: it was bewildered by being forced within the confines of a small country with a population of eight million".<sup>396</sup> The Treaty could, moreover, serve as a scapegoat for all Hungary's ensuing woes.<sup>397</sup> Left-wing marginalisation meant that no great heed was paid to vision of good neighbourly cooperation within a Danube Federation, leaving revisionism as the focus of political and diplomatic effort.<sup>398</sup> Hungarian foreign

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<sup>396</sup> Kontler, p327.

<sup>397</sup> Cf. Kontler, p344.

<sup>398</sup> On the strength of the conservatives, see Kontler, pp327 and 345-6. The aftershock of Trianon can still be felt in contemporary Hungarian nationalism with its ongoing concern for the fate of the minorities (cf. Kontler, p344, Molnár, pp343-5 and 348-9, Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp325-9 and *Trianon*, pp620-30). On revisionism, see Kontler, pp355-8; Molnár, p266; Romsics 2000, pp233-250 and Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp104-5 and 121. The Danubian Confederation was proposed by Lajos Kossuth, leader of the 1848 Revolution. Originally intended only for use in diplomatic negotiations, it was published in the journal *L'Alleanza* in Milan in May 1862. It would have consisted of Hungary (in a personal union with Transylvania), Croatia, the Romanian principalities and Serbia. Besides economic union, there would have been joint foreign and military affairs under the authority of a two-chamber assembly and a council. Each member state would be sovereign in its domestic affairs, with full religious equality and language rights at village and county level (Kontler, p275). On Kossuth's plans, see also György Száraz, *Lajos Kossuth's Role in the Conceptualization of a Danubian Federation*, in Romsics 1999, pp61-97. See also Molnár, p263 on the idea of a Danubian Confederation in French policy. Oszkár Jászi (1875-1957) took up the idea again in *A Monarchia jövője, A dualizmus bukása és a Dunai Egyesült Államok, Új magyar részvénytársaság*, Budapest, 1918. On Jászi's ideas, see György Litván, *Oszkár Jászi's Danube Federation Theories*, in Romsics 1999, pp227-242, and in the same volume, György Gyarmati, *Conceptual Changes in Central European Integration in Hungarian Political Thinking, 1920-1948*, pp201-226; Péter Hanák, "Why Did the Danubian Federation Plans Fail?", in Romsics 1999, pp305-313 and Jászi Oszkár *dunai patriotizmusa*, Magvető Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1985 and Rudolf Joó, *A nemzeti kérdés és a dunai föderációs-konföderációs tervek a 19. század második felében és a 20. század elején*, in *Nemzeti és nemzetiségi önrendelkezés, önkormányzat, egyenjogúság*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1984, pp38-58. On possible alternatives to the course

policy was faced with a choice between two irreconcilable courses of action: integration in the new order of Europe and border modifications based on earning the goodwill of the Great Powers and the neighbouring states or forcible restoration of Greater Hungary based on armed cooperation with the other vanquished.<sup>399</sup> In opting for the latter, Hungary was propelled into the arms of Germany.<sup>400</sup>

The representations, which I consider to be of relevance to the state of affairs ensuing after Trianon, were produced on both sides of the new frontier, by *anyaországi*, Romanian and Transylvanian intellectuals. Inclusion is no longer restricted to the mainstream, but the unifying theme is to be found in the subject matter: the identity of the Hungarian minority. Those emanating from within the minority itself were often drafted in response to Romanian charges of treachery, disloyalty or nurturing irredentism or set out survival strategies. This had obvious ramifications for content: the minority members reconciled to staying put had to "sell" themselves as loyal to the new state to appear unthreatening and ward off discrimination. Moreover there was a broad consensus within the minority that presenting a united front would allow them to communicate their demands to the Romanians more effectively. Any hint of fragmentation or being riven by strife would create scope for competing factions to be played off against one another, sapping the strength of all. Many of the representations gloss over disagreements and disharmonies for this very reason. Throughout the period covered the Transylvanians preferred to dedicate their energies and efforts to ensuring the welfare of a single political party,<sup>401</sup> which inhibited the plurality of opinion that might otherwise have been expected. Thus the internal representations had to conform not only to the logic of Hungarianness, but also had to bow to outside exigencies.

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Hungary steered between the wars, see György Gyarmati, *A revízió alternatívája*, in *Limes*, 28, 1997, pp43-79.

<sup>399</sup> Kontler, p354. Cf. *Sugar 1994*, pp327-9.

<sup>400</sup> On Hungary and Germany, see Macartney, *op. cit.*, pp225-235, *Molnár*, pp280-3, Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp133-147 and *Sugar 1994*, pp332, 335-344 and 346-353.

<sup>401</sup> Imre Mikó in *Huszonkét év*, Studium, Budapest, 1941 (henceforth *Mikó*), which remains the best source on the period even today, meticulously catalogues the cracks in the united front on pp66-7, 72-3, 86, 93-4, 155-6, 165-7, 188-192 and 194-7. On Mikó, see Sándor Balázs, *Mikó Imre, Élet-és pályakép*, Polis Könyvkiadó, Kolozsvár, 2003.

In stark contrast, the Romanian stances were frequently concerned with downgrading the Hungarians to barbarous invaders who upset the peaceful civilisation of the indigenous Romanians, descendants of the Dacians and heirs of Rome. The Transylvanians were reminded of the reversal of fortune, which had befallen them that they remained on sufferance whilst the chief motive was to vindicate the decision made at Trianon to place Transylvania under Romanian rule by asserting priority.<sup>402</sup>

The Transylvanians were additionally impaired in their ability to engage in autonomous intellectual production by the crippling effects of mass unemployment amongst former civil servants leading to the impoverishment of the middle classes, which subsequently acted as a major brake on the funding of mother-tongue publications. At the same time, the expropriation of land crippled the churches in their capacity as educational providers since they could barely afford the upkeep of the schools that had formed the backbone of teaching in Transylvania. To all intents and purposes fluency in Romanian became the inescapable precondition of entry to university, agricultural colleges and other seats of tertiary learning.<sup>403</sup> These developments combined to put normal cultural reproduction at risk, the fear of an erosion of identity lurking not far behind. As a result the sheer number of representations dropped drastically.

This trend was exacerbated under Communism, partially due to the constraints of the ideology itself, which held that history had been moving inexorably towards its culmination in the revolution,<sup>404</sup> partially because of the propensity inherent in principles of classification to project themselves back through time. Only one version of history was encouraged by the Party. Indeed Ceauşescu's regime founded its entire claim to legitimacy upon this interpretation of history, representing itself as the only government ever to grasp fully the aspirations and fight for the true interests of its populace having distilled the message of the past. The entire apparatus of overt and

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<sup>402</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>403</sup> See Chapter Two for a more detailed elaboration of these points.

<sup>404</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, edited by C.J. Arthur, Lawrence and Wishart, 1999 (original edition 1970) pp42-52, 57-60, 65-8, 87-9 and 94; Giddens, *op. cit.*, pp18-34; cf. S.H.Rigby, *Marxism and History* (henceforth *Rigby 1998*) Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1998 (originally 1987), pp7-15, 30-1, 71-7, 104-7, 143-170 and his *Historical Causation: Is One Thing more Important than Another?* in *History*, 80, 1995, pp227-242 and Szporluk, pp3-4, 19-20 and 62-4.



more subtle coercion was subordinated to the cause of controlling representations (one of the more ingenious ploys directed towards achieving this aim was the rationing of paper).<sup>405</sup> In addition to the subordination of print runs to the whims of the Party, Ceaușescu's words literally became law, the fount of information prefacing changes in policy. Similarly, his speeches dictated the contents of approved Hungarian minority representations, by signalling the relevant issues to be dealt with. Ambitious Party faithfuls slavishly reiterated his words in thinly disguised form as part of a ritual obeisance, whilst the bolder, more critical spirits felt duty-bound to react by tactfully countering his more extreme utterances (therefore also centering their representations on Ceaușescu's latest offerings).

The difficulties in guaranteeing an adequate foundation for cultural reproduction amongst the Transylvanians were compounded by the worst excesses of the *Conducător's* reign, whereby they were isolated from contacts with Hungary, deprived of the concomitant linguistic input and even their physical record of their existence, their imprint on the environment was to be annihilated (by the wholesale demolition of ancient villages and monuments).<sup>406</sup>

### **III Structure**

Chapter One, which presents the theoretical background to the case study, begins with a discussion of Durkheim's theory of social fact. If a collectivity accepts and implements a set of organising principles and representations they attain the status of social fact. In a challenge to conventional rationality, a myth becomes true if a society sees fit to regard it as such. When this consensus is reached, the coercive (or behaviour-regulating) aspect of the social fact is forgotten. Following Mary Douglas<sup>407</sup> I contend that this invisibility lies at the heart of the principle of classification, concealing its provenance. It is inappropriate to discount a priori beliefs that hold collectivities together, such as religion no matter how outlandish they

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<sup>405</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>406</sup> Cf. Dinu Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past*, The Bath Press, London, 1990; Gábor Vincze, *Illúziók és csalódások. Fejezetek a romániai magyarság második világháború utáni történetéből*, Státus Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1999 (henceforth *Illúziók*), p100 and Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp286-7.

<sup>407</sup> In *How Institutions Think*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1987 (henceforth *Institutions*) and *Implicit Meanings*, Routledge, London, 1993 (originally 1975), henceforth *Implicit*.

may appear at first glance.<sup>408</sup> By the same token, nationalism and the representations it stimulates, far from being the ravings of a few misguided intellectuals hoodwinking innocent populations or a subspecies of unreason, emerge as social facts. Rather than discrediting it further, the emotions stirred by nationalism's symbols (emotion traditionally having been depicted as the antithesis of reason in Western thought) occupy a central position in its appeal.<sup>409</sup>

The importance of contextuality in the genesis of shared categories of thought and in decisions concerning what knowledge is worthwhile is then emphasised. Once a principle of classification has become socially established it imparts meaning and order to an otherwise indifferent and chaotic universe,<sup>410</sup> thereby providing criteria of relevance and irrelevance. This is the point of departure for the exploration of the cognitive dimension of nationalism.

A closer examination of the relationship between society and cognition, lays bare the degree to which the smooth functioning of society depends on the compression of reality into manageable proportions, which the principles of classification achieve. Returning to Douglas' insights into the workings of institutions I argue that beyond enabling us to interact and approach new situations with confidence by permitting us to take so much for granted, the principle of classification itself must disappear from view in order to be truly effective. Only if it bears the semblance of being inscribed in nature itself can it become convincing. As part of the mental furniture we cease to notice how it conditions our attitudes, it sinks into the doxa. History itself, however, is strewn with struggles between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and the menace of cognitive dissonance is ever-present.<sup>411</sup>

Having reviewed why we need principles of classification and why in our everyday lives we are usually not aware of our reliance upon them or of how they channel our thought, I move on to an elaboration of their properties and their resemblance to

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<sup>408</sup> Cf. *Elementary*, p430-1.

<sup>409</sup> For the "rehabilitation" of the emotional dimension in relation to nationalism see Guibernau, pp43, 44-5, 51, 65 and pp75-6 as well as Durkheim, *Elementary*, pp229-231.

<sup>410</sup> For the transformation of chaos into cosmos, see Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1991 (originally 1965), pp10-11.

<sup>411</sup> Durkheim's main interest was in cohesion rather than rifts. Cf. Giddens, *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1971 (references are to the 2000 edition), ppix, 65-118 and Guibernau, pp21-31 and 39-42.

symbols. From this it becomes clear that the strategic manipulation of symbols to consolidate and later revitalise the hidden principle of classification is no accident.

Apart from furnishing us with a chart for navigating the potentially treacherous waters that surround us, investing our social relations with an element of predictability and enhancing our feeling of security as a result, principles of classification operate as boundary markers and it is in this capacity that they engender identities.

Contextuality is once again brought to the fore in weighing the merits of various ways of looking at identity. Having critically appraised social constructionism, I then advance my own hypothesis of identity, involving a series of headings under which the plethora of identities that inhere in individuals can be gathered: material, functional, affective and circumstantial. The most stable and permanent of these are the material identities.

The body with its growth and ageing processes supplies a natural metaphor for identity as a concept. Whereas continuity is unproblematic for the individual, collective identity has to be periodically reaffirmed, cultivated by means of ritual.

At this juncture I bring together the arguments concerning principles of classification and identity by maintaining that nationhood is the principle of classification expressed through nationalism, which both creates national identity and attributes pre-eminence to it, ranking it alongside other material identities as primordial and betokening absolute difference.<sup>412</sup>

Although the nationalist ideal is that of a perfect co-extensivity of nation and state, it has seldom been achieved, giving rise to the problem of minorities. I consider the identity of these "outsiders within" to borrow Smith's evocative phrase<sup>413</sup> from the point of view of their vulnerability and the threat they imply to the established order and the principle of classification.

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<sup>412</sup> To reiterate, my position on the "constitutional nationalism" of "immigrant societies", such as the USA and Canada is that publicly declared allegiance to a set of values serves as the functional equivalent of "ethnicity" elsewhere as a boundary marker, a badge of difference. My concept of materiality in relation to national identity refers to actual cultural distinctions raised by virtue of the nationalist principle of classification to the status of tokens of absolute difference, often (but not always) conflated with ideas of character, blood or race. It therefore applies to both "civic" and "ethnic" nationalisms, the distinction between them being one of emphasis or degree of inclusiveness.

<sup>413</sup> See *Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities in Myths*, p187.

The final identity to be scrutinised before proceeding to look at representations is that fostered by Communist regimes. By way of illustrating the practical effects of the enforcement of the new (Communist) principle of classification I choose the Hungarian example, partly because it explains the official aloofness to the fate of the Hungarian minorities during the Rákosi and (although to a lesser extent) Kádár eras<sup>414</sup> and partly since it shows how Hungarianness could be reinterpreted thereby facilitating the task of pinpointing the uniquely Transylvanian accommodation to the strictures imposed.

Chapter One closes with an investigation of representations and their authors, the intellectuals based on Bourdieu's field theory. As indicated previously, representations are the lifeblood of the principle of classification and its associated identity and the object of the case study which follows.

Chapter Two opens with a sketch of the historical circumstances under which a reassessment of Hungarian identity became imperative. In order to appreciate the shifts in meaning and content at the heart of this exercise, concepts of Hungarian (*anyaország*) identity prior to the upheavals triggered by the Treaty of Trianon must be analysed. These were the raw materials available to those who found themselves stranded on the wrong side of the new frontiers.

Having touched upon a number of the most influential source texts, I turn to readings drawn from the interwar years, each of which is emblematic of a particular notion of Hungarianness: as vocation, as character traits and as essence. These are then contrasted with the representations of Transylvanianness circulating amongst the Hungarian minority in Romania and the strategies adopted to prevent the complete erosion of its identity and cultural distinctiveness. Clearly, the first step towards playing an active part in the political life of the new homeland was to come to terms with the momentous change in national status that had befallen the minority. Discriminatory legislation passed by successive Romanian governments betrayed the underlying attitude towards the Hungarians: in keeping with the national principle of classification they comprised an alien element within the body of the nation. Enforced assimilation was deemed the most efficient route towards eradicating this identity, camouflaged in the case of the Land Law as equitable redistribution of

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<sup>414</sup> Cf. Walter Kemp, *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*, Palgrave, Houndmills, 1999 (henceforth *Kemp*), pp180-1.

resources amongst the poorest sections of the community and in education as common sense.

In spite of the devastating impact of the laws in terms of financial wherewithal, linguistic competence and the recruitment of replacement intellectuals (though the latter was a problem that only became acute in the longer term) Transylvanianism flourished as a literary school, its representations permeated by a distinct philosophy of identity. The work of some of its principle exponents is contemplated alongside that of writers of rival persuasions.

Chapter Three continues with the chronological survey of representations after the war from the reunification of Northern and Southern Transylvania under Communist leadership onwards, examining the manoeuvrings of the Groza and Gheorghiu-Dej administrations within the wider sphere of international relations. In agreement with Gábor Vincze<sup>415</sup> I do not construe Ceaușescu's blatantly oppressive policy towards the Hungarian minority as a radical break with a more liberal and tolerant line. Instead the occasional policy relaxations on the part of his predecessors either played to the gallery in appeasing the international community (for example the political role conceded to the MNSZ or Hungarian Popular Alliance) or were the precursors temporarily lulling the minority into a false sense of security to more disadvantageous arrangements (such as the Hungarian Autonomous Region superseded by a redrawing of the administrative boundaries that divided the Székely population, rendering it more susceptible to Romanianisation).

As the sheer number of repressive measures multiplied under Ceaușescu's iron grip, the writing of history became a boom industry where the struggle over definitions of the nation was fought. Representations of the origins of the Romanian people, far from being innocuous renditions of a distant past, legitimated the course steered by the dictator in the present. Dissenting voices were able to poison relations between Romania and its neighbour, as the scandal that erupted following the publication of a three-volume History of Transylvania in Budapest makes apparent.

The conclusion summarises the findings of the case study, subjecting them to a critical appraisal, which takes account of their implications for the theories of nationhood as a principle of classification and of identity.

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<sup>415</sup> In *Illúziók*, p85-7, 101-2, 208-212.

## Chapter One: Towards a Working Hypothesis of Identity.

### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to lay the theoretical foundations of the subsequent case study. Before proceeding to a brief outline of its structure, two key terms, nation and nation-state need to be defined.

At its most basic level, a nation is a human collectivity organized in accordance with a principle of inclusion and exclusion (classification), which involves giving it an identity. Of all the analysts of the nation, A. D. Smith captures its qualities best: “*a named human population occupying a historic territory or homeland and sharing common myths and memories; a mass, public culture; a single economy; and common rights and duties for all members*”.<sup>416</sup> To this I find it appropriate to add two elements from Montserrat Guibernau’s definition, namely that the nation has “a common project for the future” and that it claims “the right to rule itself”.<sup>417</sup>

In the *Encyclopaedia of Nationalism*,<sup>418</sup> A. D. Smith, under the entry “State and Nation” links the goal of autonomy espoused under nationalism with the desire to attain a sovereign state for each nation, a “nation-state”, which he defines as “a political community that is congruent and coextensive with a historic culture-community” (that is, a nation). He continues: “Not only are the boundaries of state and nation coextensive; within its borders there is a single nation, and its public culture and laws, as well as its myths and memories, encompass and pervade the whole population within its boundaries”. Whereas this definition may serve as an ideal-type, it poses certain problems: “In practice, few contemporary polities can be characterized as ‘nation-states’ in the strict sense of the term. Most must be regarded as ‘national states’, states that aspire to become unified nations and are legitimated by the principles of *nationalism*. The reason is that such political communities are not

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<sup>416</sup> *The Nation in History*, University Press of New England, Hanover, 2000, p3. Emphasis in original.

<sup>417</sup> Guibernau, p47.

<sup>418</sup> Edited by Athena S. Leoussi, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick and London, 2001. All of the quotations from Smith may be found on p286. Emphasis in original.

culturally unified, let alone homogenous; they usually include one or more ethnic minorities, and derive their origins from several ethnic and cultural sources". Montserrat Guibernau echoes these concerns: "The nation-state is a modern phenomenon, characterized by the formation of a kind of state which has the monopoly of what it claims to be the legitimate use of force within a demarcated territory and seeks to unite the people subjected to its rule by means of homogenization, creating a common culture, symbols, values, reviving traditions and myths of origin, and sometimes inventing them. The main differences between a nation and a nation-state, when the nation and the state do not coincide, as they hardly ever do, are that, while the members of a nation are conscious of forming a community, the nation-state seeks to create a nation and develop a sense of community stemming from it. While the nation has a common culture, values and symbols, the nation-state has as an objective the creation of a common culture, symbols and values. The members of a nation can look back to their common past; if the members of a nation-state do likewise, they may be confronted with a blank picture – because the nation-state simply did not exist in the past – or with a fragmented and diversified one, because they previously belonged to different ethno-nations. While the people who form a nation have a sense of fatherland and feel attached to a territory, the nation-state may be the result of a treaty, or the will of politicians who decide where to draw the line between states".<sup>419</sup>

In the world of nations, the nation-state in its ideal form has become the internationally acknowledged unit of popular sovereignty (democratic rule). As the accepted standard, it enjoys a degree of respectability and prestige. However, this has the effect of screening out the existence of national minorities, such as the Hungarians in Romania and nations without a state, such as the Scots or Catalonians.<sup>420</sup>

Dominant national communities have the dual advantage of being in possession of a fully-fledged administrative apparatus governing the entirety of a territory (including the minority or stateless nation enclaves) and of outside recognition of the borders and official bodies of its state. They can thus appeal to stability and rationality in resisting separatist agendas, confining concessions to greater autonomy largely to the cultural

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<sup>419</sup> Guibernau, pp47-8. See also the discussion on "legitimate" and "illegitimate" states, pp59-62.

<sup>420</sup> See Guibernau, pp100-114.

realm (limited tax-raising powers may also be granted to a regional assembly, but foreign policy and defence usually remain the preserve of the centre).<sup>421</sup>

I will concentrate on the nation-state as an institution both founded upon and employing a principle of classification (nationhood) as its source of legitimation. Institutions subtly yet pervasively influence our ways of thinking and making sense of the world, convincing us of their expediency, whilst overwhelming us with their normality. It is this very banality (Billig), which renders their workings invisible. Having examined these properties of institutions, I move on to discuss the nature of classifications before turning more specifically to the issue of nationhood.

The cognitive and emotional power of national identity cannot be fully understood outside a discussion of identity in general, which takes up the bulk of the chapter. The volume of academic work on identity exceeds that on nations and nationalism many times over, straddling the disciplines of sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, anthropology and political science. This in itself should suffice to indicate that there is a multitude of possible approaches to the subject beyond the one adopted here (although the particular merit of the latter is precisely that it does not take national identity to be either an outdated collective delusion, an irrational aberration or a mere side-issue of minor importance, whose specific contents are an irrelevance. Such views obscure the fact that national identity is the cohesive principle, which continues to hold collectivities together in the world of nations, as Billig has so cogently demonstrated and they fail to take the role of representations into account). Providing a comprehensive overview of the literature on identity in even one of the fields of research mentioned is not my intention here. Instead I shall confine myself to listing a few of the publications, which I have found particularly useful as background material as well as some other important contributions, which cover pertinent aspects not given prominence due to my specific focus.

Philip Gleason in *Identifying Identity: A Semantic History*,<sup>422</sup> and Andrew Weigert in *Identity: Its Emergence Within Sociological Psychology*,<sup>423</sup> both chart the origin and development of the concept in the United States, outlining the most influential schools of thought (including the writings of Erik H. Erikson, Mead and Goffman)

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<sup>421</sup> Cf. Guibernau, pp108-111.

<sup>422</sup> In *The Journal of American History*, 69 (4), 1983, pp910-931.

<sup>423</sup> In *Symbolic Interaction*, 6 (2), 1983, pp183-206.



and as such constitute valuable sources of bibliographical information on the subject. Richard Jenkins in *Social Identity*<sup>424</sup> complements these with a more comprehensive treatment from a European perspective.

The historic specificity and cultural relativity of concepts of personal identity are revealed in Aaron Gurevich's *The Origins of European Individualism*,<sup>425</sup> Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*,<sup>426</sup> Roy F. Baumeister's *Identity*,<sup>427</sup> Leslie Stevenson and David L. Haberman's *Ten Theories of Human Nature*<sup>428</sup> and in *Anthropology of the Self*<sup>429</sup> by Brian Morris.

Heiner Keupp *et al*'s, *Identitätskonstruktionen*,<sup>430</sup> is illuminating in respect of the differences between modern (p30 and 40-5) and postmodern views on identity (pp46-59), as is the companion volume *Identitätsarbeit Heute*<sup>431</sup> edited by Keupp and Höfer. Lutz Niethammer's *Kollektive Identität*<sup>432</sup> traces the phenomenon to its intellectual roots as well as offering a blistering critique.

On the issue of territoriality and identity, one of the areas to which I pay relatively less attention Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*,<sup>433</sup> Hastings Donnan and Thomas M. Wilson, *Borders*<sup>434</sup> and *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*<sup>435</sup> edited by Fredrik Barth are indispensable.

Similarly, on geography and identity I recommend the collection of essays in *Geography and National Identity*,<sup>436</sup> edited by David Hooson and Gertjan Dijkink's *National Identity and Geopolitical Visions*.<sup>437</sup>

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<sup>424</sup> For bibliographical information, see footnote 154 above.

<sup>425</sup> Blackwell, Oxford, 1995.

<sup>426</sup> Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

<sup>427</sup> Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986.

<sup>428</sup> Third Edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998.

<sup>429</sup> Pluto Press, London and Boulder Colorado, 1994.

<sup>430</sup> Heiner Keupp, Thomas Ahbe, Wolfgang Gmür, Renate Höfer, Beate Mitzscherlich, Wolfgang Kraus and Florian Strauss, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2002 (originally 1999), henceforth *Keupp*.

<sup>431</sup> Heiner Keupp and Renate Höfer, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1997 (henceforth *Identitätsarbeit*).

<sup>432</sup> Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 2000 (henceforth *Niethammer*).

<sup>433</sup> Routledge, London, 2000 (original 1985).

<sup>434</sup> Berg, Oxford, 1999.

<sup>435</sup> Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1994 (original edition 1969).

<sup>436</sup> Blackwell, Oxford, 1994.

Following the discussion of national identity, minority and Communist identity are also considered as a preliminary to the case study (of Hungarians in Romania over an extended period, which includes a Communist takeover).

The closing section introduces the idea of representations and their producers, the intellectuals. It is through the critical analysis of representations that we can gain crucial insights into how identities are constructed and maintained and their relationship with the principle of classification.

## ***Section One: Remembering and Forgetting.***

### **1.1 Definition of Social Fact.**

In *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim defines social facts as follows: "A social fact is any way of acting, whether fixed or not, capable of exerting over the individual an external constraint;

or:

*which is general over the whole of a given society whilst having an existence of its own, independent of its individual manifestations.*"<sup>438</sup>

That the individual does not necessarily recognise the constraint as external, that one of its persuasive virtues lies in the facility with which it may be internalised whilst continuing to manifest itself externally in individual actions is also taken into account.

Durkheim writes: "If this constraint in time ceases to be felt it is because it gradually gives rise to habits, to inner tendencies which render it superfluous; but they supplant the constraint only because they are derived from it."<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Routledge, London, 1996.

<sup>438</sup> Edited with an introduction by Steven Lukes, Macmillan, Houndmills, 1982, p59. On Durkheim's *Rules*, see also Giddens, *op. cit.*, pp86-94.

<sup>439</sup> *Op. cit.*, p54.

and: "Hence we are the victims of an illusion which leads us to believe we have ourselves produced what has been imposed upon us externally."<sup>440</sup>

In this way, the promptings and demands of society become a "natural" part of our cognitive processes, influencing our behaviour without our perceiving their original source outside ourselves.<sup>441</sup> Our conscience, our sense of right and wrong share this origin. Nor are our dispositions or expectations immune to this influence. Thus society extends to embrace the whole of reality, defining the limits of the possible and the impossible.

Values, morals and even prejudices, provided that they find expression in collective action, therefore belong to the realm of social fact as much as the written laws that constitute and regulate the life of society. In short, whatever may be observed to have a social effect is a social fact.

Conventional notions of reality as that which may be empirically established to be true take on a different complexion. Reality comprises that which is real in its social effects. Such effects cannot simply be ignored or dismissed as distortions, superstitions or delusions, nor can it be denied that they correspond to genuine needs. Durkheim states these points eloquently: "The whole social world seems populated with forces that in reality exist only in our minds. We know what the flag is for the soldier, but in itself it is only a bit of cloth. (...) collective representations often impute to the things to which they refer properties that do not exist in them in any form or to any degree whatsoever. From the most commonplace object, they can make a sacred and very powerful being.

However, even though purely ideal, the powers thereby conferred on that object behave as if they were real. They determine man's conduct with the same necessity as physical forces. (...) The soldier who dies defending his flag certainly does not believe he has sacrificed himself to a piece of cloth. Such things happen because

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<sup>440</sup> *Op. cit.*, p53.

<sup>441</sup> See also p226 of *Elementary* (for bibliographical details, see footnote 443 on p103 above).

social thought, with its imperative authority, has a power that individual thought cannot possibly have."<sup>442</sup>

What has sometimes been referred to as collective fiction is therefore social fact, whether this be a faith, an ideology or a nation, as Durkheim's example shows. One of the distinctive properties of such collective beliefs is their extreme contagiousness. Once conceived, they irresistibly spread to subordinate every aspect of existence to their premises, always retaining internal consistency. They become reality by being congruent with reality in the minds of their adherents. The sole requirement for this to occur is that they be beliefs held in common. It is from this that they derive their authority. Their plausibility emanates from their link with the structure of the society that they serve, reflecting it in a transfigured form.<sup>443</sup> This is why they do not seem arbitrary. Once asserted, they are open to challenge from competing views. Nations, not the primordial collectivities that nationalists believe them to be, are in a sense "imagined communities", but they are also social facts.<sup>444</sup> The question as to whether or not they are simply invented traditions in Hobsbawmian mode is in many respects misplaced:<sup>445</sup> it neither detracts from the cognitive warping potential of nation-states as institutions (or, for that matter, the "material" quality of national identity) nor does it undermine the nation's undeniable presence in everyday life. What does matter is not *that* the nation is imagined, but *how* it is imagined and in

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<sup>442</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp228-9.

<sup>443</sup> *Elementary, passim.*

<sup>444</sup> Cf. the discussion of Benedict Anderson above.

<sup>445</sup> Kertzer states his allegiance to the "invented tradition" school most forcefully: "the nation itself has no palpable existence outside the symbolism through which it is envisioned" (p6). He continues: "People subscribe to the 'master fiction' that the world is divided into a fixed number of mutually exclusive nations; they see these units as part of the nature of things, and assume an antiquity that the nations in fact lack. This symbolic conception of the universe leads people to believe that everyone 'has' a nationality, in the same sense that everyone has a gender" (p6). Cf. *Kemp*, pp16: "political culture is like a nationally shared apperception – a cumulative integration of the nation's previous knowledge and experience into its collective understanding of present reality. Granted, some aspects of this identity may be invented or based on mythology, but they must still strike a chord with the nation's sense of itself. I therefore profoundly disagree with David Kertzer's assertion (...), for this would suggest that there is no deeper collective consciousness behind the symbols".

what way this imagining shapes our wider perceptions. These are the issues I intend to address.

The same point can be made in relation to a nation's willingness to avail itself of myths in creating a glorious past or identity. The ease with which such elements can be incorporated into national lore should not tempt us to write off collective identities altogether. Regardless of the implausibility of certain of its building blocks, the nation is real in that it is a community of shared culture, memory, history and experience.

## 1.2 Contextuality.

The meeting of minds which gives rise to shared categories of thought is the genesis of society. No object in the physical world carries meaning within itself.<sup>446</sup> It is society that projects meaning outwards, reflecting its principles of organisation, ordering the universe and assigning mankind his proper place within it.<sup>447</sup> Reality itself is therefore a social construct.<sup>448</sup>

Making sense of the world, the act of agreeing on a system of classification, also involves a drawing of boundaries around a community, creating a distinction between insiders and outsiders, excluding those who do not adhere to the moral precepts of the group.<sup>449</sup> The practical experience of cosmos building<sup>450</sup> provides the raw materials

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<sup>446</sup> Cf. Jenkins, p4.

<sup>447</sup> Cf. *Elementary*, p230: "Religious force is none other than the feeling that the collectivity inspires in its members, but projected outside the minds that experience them and objectified. To become objectified, it fixes on a thing that thereby becomes sacred; any object can play this role."

<sup>448</sup> Cf. *Construction*, pp13, 123, 134 and 146.

<sup>449</sup> As Stuart Hall phrases it: "identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the "positive" meaning of any term – and thus its 'identity' – can be constructed. Throughout their careers, identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to leave out, to render 'outside', abjected. Every identity has at its 'margin', an excess, something more" (*Who Needs Identity?* In: *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, Sage, London, 1996, pp4-5. Emphasis in original).

from which ideas are formed. Ideas cannot be conceived outside a social context and their substance as well as their wider significance reflect this context. This remains true even where alternatives to the prevailing social organisation are proposed. In most instances, the alternative defines itself in opposition to dominant values. In rejecting them, it negatively integrates some of their elements. In other words, even the most inspired and fanciful notions of improvement cannot escape the influence of what is. Society defines success and failure, teaches us what we should expect in life, what is desirable for us to strive after. Changes in outlook are preceded by changes in practice that enable us to abandon "outmoded" ideas, replacing them with concepts that better suit our needs.

Once the historically-specific social order has taken firm root, the qualities attributed to nature are felt to inhere in it and the meanings contained in man's environment are harnessed to the purposes of perpetuating it in a strategy of legitimation, "proving" that it is the best for the collectivity involved. Thus the social origin of these meanings is forgotten and they assume the appearance of independence, existing separately, apart from social intervention.<sup>451</sup>

The effect of consensus is to encourage cohesion within a given society, but this is not the only principle at work, for alongside consensus is conflict, a centrifugal force that constantly threatens to sever ties of solidarity, contesting conventions of thought and behaviour. The tension arising from the co-existence of these two principles explains the dynamic nature of society. Without conflict, there could be no change. Without consensus, there could be no stability, a modicum of which is indispensable for regulating interactions. Far from being the result of obedience of inexorable laws inscribed in the universe itself, the epitome of reason, consensus is the product of continuous negotiation, though not necessarily on a conscious level. Maintenance and reproduction of a social order require the consent of the individuals that make up society, whether they are aware of this or not.

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<sup>450</sup> I have borrowed this concept from Mircea Eliade, see footnote 410, p101 above. Cf. also *Construction*, pp121-2.

<sup>451</sup> Douglas, *Implicit*, pp210-229 and 276-318 and *Institutions*, pp45-53 and 63-5. See below for a more detailed discussion.

### 1.3 Society and Cognition.

"Mankind is an inventive species; and where an invention is obvious and absolutely necessary, it may as properly be said to be natural as any thing that proceeds immediately from original principles, without the intervention of thought or reflection."

(David Hume: *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book Three, Section One, p536).<sup>452</sup>

Society exerts a profound influence on cognition by providing us with the categories in and with which we think. Our schemes of perception allow us to arrange and classify our experiences by submitting them to its constraints, organising them in a hierarchy of relevance, of what is worth remembering and what may safely be forgotten. We fail to notice what does not jar, what fits in neatly with what we have become accustomed to expect.<sup>453</sup> Routine dulls inquisitiveness. What is taken for granted may be ignored. The "normal", that which we expect to happen, does not make demands on our attention precisely because it fits in with undisputed patterns. This has the advantage of allowing us to make shortcuts so that we do not require to evaluate each new situation as it arises, but can make assumptions about the likely course of events.<sup>454</sup> The validity of these assumptions is confirmed in our dealings with others from a similar background with similar expectations. Thus we are put in a position to absorb and assimilate vast amounts of information, which can be used in refining strategies for living.<sup>455</sup>

In two works, *Implicit Meanings* and *How Institutions Think*, Mary Douglas examines the mechanisms by which thought-styles become convincing and which permit them to subordinate the flow of knowledge to social control. Reliance on institutions

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<sup>452</sup> Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969 (original 1739-40).

<sup>453</sup> Cf. p243, *Implicit*.

<sup>454</sup> Cf. *Construction*, p71.

<sup>455</sup> Cf. p48, *Institutions*; Bourdieu's *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997 (original 1977, henceforth *Outline*), p169 and *Construction*, pp74-5.

confers certain benefits such as facilitating communication and saving energy.<sup>456</sup>

Before this can be achieved, however, an essential precondition must be fulfilled:

"(...) the incipient institution needs some stabilising principle to stop its premature demise. That stabilizing principle is the naturalisation of social classifications. There needs to be an analogy by which the formal structure of a crucial set of social relations is found in the physical world, or in the supernatural world, or in eternity, anywhere, so long as it is not seen as a socially contrived arrangement. When the analogy is applied back and forth from one set of social relations to another and from these back to nature, its recurring formal structure becomes easily recognised and endowed with self-validating truth."<sup>457</sup>

The analogies endow the institutions with venerability, which consolidates the hold they enjoy on individual minds: "Any institution that is going to keep its shape needs to gain legitimacy by distinctive grounding in nature and reason: then it affords to its members a set of analogies with which to explore the world and with which to justify the naturalness and reasonableness of the instituted rules, and it can keep its identifiable continuing form.

Any institution then starts to control the memory of its members; it causes them to forget experiences incompatible with its righteous image, and it brings to their minds events, which sustain the view of nature that is complementary to itself. It provides categories of their thought, sets the terms for self-knowledge, and fixes identities. All of this is not enough. It must secure the social edifice by sacralizing the principles of justice."<sup>458</sup>

One of the salient features of an institution, then, is that it moulds the past, individual as well as collective, in its own image.<sup>459</sup> The effect of this is to enhance its authority and prestige by ensuring that rival interpretations drop out of sight, claiming a monopoly on truth. Compatibility with the cherished assumptions of the institution is of vital importance when it comes to encouraging receptiveness to new concepts:

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<sup>456</sup> *Institutions*, pp. 55 and 63.

<sup>457</sup> *Op. cit.*, p 48.

<sup>458</sup> *Op. cit.*, p112.

<sup>459</sup> See also *Institutions*, p92 and cf. *Construction*, pp120-1.



"Only one term sums up all the qualities that enable a speculation to become established and then to escape oblivion; that is the principle of coherence. (...)

The principle of coherence is not satisfied by purely cognitive and technological fit. It must also be founded on accepted analogies with nature. This means that it must be compatible with the prevailing political values which are themselves naturalized. (...).

Inevitably, if it seems that an analogy does match nature, it is because the analogy is already in use for grounding dominant political assumptions. It is not nature that makes the match, but society."<sup>460</sup>

The primary advantage of deploying analogies from nature is that nature itself possesses a quality of self-evidence, which removes these analogies from the sphere of argument and debate, of compromise and negotiation.<sup>461</sup> To struggle against nature is an exercise in futility, because its commands are inexorable. We must accept what is, resigning ourselves to it with dignity. Thus our social institutions are infused with a sense of inevitability.<sup>462</sup> From these considerations it emerges that control of the public memory<sup>463</sup> and of the constituting analogies through representations is of the utmost significance in reproducing a given social order.

A second effect of the use of nature as the source of legitimation is that it makes the workings of the institutions invisible so that we cease to be immediately aware of our reliance on them.<sup>464</sup> Once again, this means that they are put beyond reach of questions and, should serious doubts arise, their identification with innate principles of justice as mentioned above makes us think twice about overturning them.

The concealment brought about by self-evidence and its relationship to the perpetuation of power structures is made even more explicit by Pierre Bourdieu in his exploration of the interdependence of practice and cognitive and social structures. The affinities with Douglas' arguments are at their most apparent in his definition of

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<sup>460</sup> *Op. cit.*, p90.

<sup>461</sup> For this point see *Implicit*.

<sup>462</sup> Cf. *Construction* on reification, pp106-9.

<sup>463</sup> Douglas uses this phrase in *Institutions*, p80. Historians are the custodians of public memory.

<sup>464</sup> Cf. *Institutions*, p98.

doxa: "Every established order tends to produce (...) the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and the best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents' aspirations, out of which arises the *sense of limits*, commonly called the *sense of reality*, i.e. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalised classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order. Systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e. the divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based: in the extreme case, that is to say, when there is a quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organisation (...) the natural and the social world appears as self-evident. This experience we shall call *doxa*, so as to distinguish it from an orthodox or heterodox belief implying awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs. Schemes of thought and perception can produce the objectivity that they do produce only by producing misrecognition of the limits of the cognition that they make possible, thereby founding immediate adherence, in the doxic mode, to the world of tradition experienced as a "natural world" and taken for granted. The instruments of knowledge of the social world are in this case (objectively) political instruments which contribute to the reproduction of the social world by producing immediate adherence to the world, seen as self-evident and undisputed, of which they are the product and which they reproduce the structures in a transformed form."<sup>465</sup>

The principles of organisation of a society derive their enduring appeal from their doxic quality. They resist change, though they can never escape it. In Bourdieu's vision of society, domination and the struggle for supremacy are the only constants. Domination must disguise itself in order to retain its efficacy, lest it lose the support of the collectivity. It is the specific form and content of the strategies of dissimulation that vary over time and in differing social contexts rather than the necessity to dissimulate in itself. It is worth stressing, however, that, for Bourdieu, these strategies are not pursued consciously or in a spirit of cold-blooded calculation. As

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<sup>465</sup> *Outline*, p164. Emphasis in the original.

soon as doxa is revealed as arbitrary, it is forced onto the defensive, transformed into orthodoxy, which Bourdieu labels an "imperfect substitute" since it is immediately associated with the self-interest of the establishment.<sup>466</sup> It no longer has the spontaneous and unreflective character of reflex or instinct: what was once routine must now be justified, must assert its claim to superiority alongside a host of rivals.

A further concept, that of habitus, recognises the social element of cognition without reducing the individual to a mere passive recipient of external stimuli, allowing for divergence in responses and in strategy whilst at the same time stating why there is a remarkable similarity in thought processes amongst members of the same collectivity.<sup>467</sup> "The structures constitutive of a particular type of environment (...) produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor."<sup>468</sup>

One of the merits of this approach is that it insists cognition is firmly embedded in social context: it is an integral part of practice. The operations of habitus only make sense within a continuum stretching back into the past and forward beyond the immediately perceived consequences of action. Habitus reproduces the structures, which engendered it, prolonging them, ensuring continuity and regularity.<sup>469</sup> By subtly guiding our aspirations, habitus encourages us to accept the social constraints imposed upon us, to make do with our allotted portion.<sup>470</sup> It facilitates exchanges by providing us with a common frame of reference: "One of the fundamental effects of

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<sup>466</sup> *Outline*, p169. Once doxa is challenged, its suitability to act as a foundation for dispensing justice appears dubious.

<sup>467</sup> Which could be explained in slightly different terms as common outlook based on culture. On habitus, see also *Billig*, p42.

<sup>468</sup> *Outline*, p72.

<sup>469</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 72-73 and p82.

<sup>470</sup> *Op. cit.*, p77.

the orchestration of habitus is the production of a common sense world endowed with *objectivity* secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world, in other words the harmonisation of agents' experience and the continuous reinforcement that each of them receives from the expression of individual or collective (...), improvised or programmed (...), of similar or identical experiences. The homogeneity of habitus is what - within the limits of the group of agents possessing the schemes (of production and interpretation) implied in their production - causes practices and works to be immediately intelligible and foreseeable, and hence taken for granted."<sup>471</sup>

In the light of the above deliberations, claims about the nature of reality can no longer maintain any pretence of objective neutrality. They must always be evaluated carefully, both as representations and as political justifications for a sanctioned course of action. They bind together members of a collectivity. Human knowledge and human cognition are mediated through our institutions as our preferences and dispositions are through our culture. Concepts cannot be divorced from social context without distortion and, ultimately, misunderstanding. The nation-state, once established as the organizing framework of a collectivity, becomes an institution. This is the source of its extraordinary grip on the minds of the people within its borders. It displays all the properties examined above (taken for granted quality, "naturalness", assuming the appearance of being the epitome of rationality, inevitability, invisibility, employing a legitimating principle of classification, "warping" cognition, naturalizing a certain view of reality and channelling thought to fit its expectations).

In their administrative capacity, nation-states differentiate between citizens and non-citizens, insiders and outsiders, nationals and non-nationals. Since the primary social significance of national identity is its use as a system of classification, it is to this aspect we shall now return in greater depth.

## 1.4 Classifications.

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<sup>471</sup> *Op. cit.*, p80. Emphasis in original.

We have already observed that systems of classification have as their motivation a wish to impart order in the midst of the chaotic variety of phenomena in the natural world. Stability and predictability are indispensable to the functioning of society. Although predictability is the rule rather than the exception in nature, with the regular rhythms of day passing into night and the changing of the seasons, randomness can never be entirely ignored. In applying classifications, situating ourselves within a complex structure of meanings, we suppress the latent feelings of uncertainty and insecurity which otherwise might inhibit us.<sup>472</sup> Our classifications guide us in our interpretation of experience and in our dealings with others. We are constantly required to take instant decisions, to consider information concerning individuals we do not know or topics about which we have no expertise. Practice demands this aptitude of us. We rely on our classifications to make rapid appraisals of new situations, sparing us the effort of lengthy deliberations for which we have no time in the cut and thrust of events. In short, classifications are principles of organisation, which create reality in their own image.<sup>473</sup>

The dichotomy is the simplest form of classification and differentiation, dividing objects into two classes. As Durkheim points out: "When a classification has only two genera, they are almost necessarily conceived as antithetical. They are used first as a means of clearly separating those things between which the contrast is most pronounced. (...) Once the logical contrast has replicated itself as a kind of social conflict, the opposition of things is extended to persons."<sup>474</sup> Having won acceptance, the opposition is ready for further use as an analogy, attracting further thought-pairs in a comparison that spreads contagiously to encompass all of reality, submitting it to the logic of its emerging categories.<sup>475</sup> A typical example of the association of thought-pairs runs as follows: man is to woman as right is to left, as day is to night, as culture is to nature, as active is to passive, as ruler is to ruled, and so on.<sup>476</sup> This, in turn, suggests the notion of kind: "Kind is the external framework whose content is

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<sup>472</sup> Cf. *Construction*, pp119-20.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2001, pp5, 11-3.

<sup>474</sup> *Elementary*, pp145-6.

<sup>475</sup> Here the term category denotes the result of the act of separating and dividing which is classification.

<sup>476</sup> Cf. *Masculine Domination*, pp7-10.

formed, in part, by objects perceived to be like one another. The content cannot itself provide the framework in which it is placed. The content is made up of *vague and fluctuating images* caused by the superimposition and partial fusion of a *definite number of individual images* that are found to have elements in common. By contrast, the framework is a definite form having fixed contours, but can be applied to an indefinite number of things, whether perceived or not and whether existing or possible. (...) A genus is in fact an ideal, yet clearly defined, grouping of things with internal bonds among them that are analogous to the bonds of kinship."<sup>477</sup> For Durkheim, classification is not possible without the experience of unity in diversity, which is society.

Durkheim goes on to mention one further property of classification, which is of interest here: "From another standpoint, a classification is also a system whose parts are arranged in a hierarchical order. Some are dominant features, and others are subordinated to those. The species and their distinctive properties are subsumed under genera having their own distinctive properties; and the different species are conceived as being on a par with one another. (...) The purpose of a classification is to establish relations of subordination and coordination, and man would not even have thought of ordering his knowledge in that way if he had not already known what a hierarchy is."<sup>478</sup> Given that this is the case, classifications lend themselves to operating as instruments of social control, reinforcing power relations by consigning them to the *doxa*, the unquestionable assumptions.<sup>479</sup> Social significance is attached to difference as a convenient sanction for the privilege and status discrepancies that separate individuals. Classification, whether dichotomal or polythetic, is universal because difference is universal.

The specific content of dichotomies and the associations that attach themselves to them differ according to the type of society in which they appear. For our purposes, the most important dichotomy (and classification) is that between members and non-members of the nation to which we shall return in a moment.

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<sup>477</sup> *Elementary*, pp147-148. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>478</sup> *Op. cit.*, p149.

<sup>479</sup> Cf. *Masculine Domination*, pp21-4, 30, 33-4 and 37-8.

## **Section Two: Towards a Working Hypothesis of Identity.**

### **2.1 The Ubiquity of Identity.**

Identity has become so important in contemporary society that it is impossible to be alive and not have an identity.<sup>480</sup> Identity pervades our innermost being, our consciousness, our self-awareness. Even death does not release us from being classified by it,<sup>481</sup> though we lose every last vestige of our former individuality in our new status as deceased, being reduced to representatives of the position or rank we once occupied, or to the absolute anonymity and obscurity of a generic category such as "woman who died at the end of the 20th century" or "unknown Scottish soldier who died heroically defending his country". We cultivate the memory of our most famous dead, celebrating their accomplishments, basking in reflected glory.<sup>482</sup> Identity is social recognition expressed as classification.<sup>483</sup>

### **2.2 The Contextuality of Identity.**

In *The Social Construction of Reality*, first published in 1966, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann<sup>484</sup> set out a theory of knowledge in society and, as an aspect of this, of identity. Their primary focus is upon the world of everyday life: "Its privileged position entitles it to the designation of paramount reality. The tension of consciousness is highest in everyday life, that is, the latter imposes itself upon consciousness in the most massive, urgent and intense manner. It is impossible to ignore, difficult even to weaken in its imperative presence. Consequently, it forces

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<sup>480</sup> Cf. Dieter Hoffman-Axthelm, *Identity and Reality: The End of the Philosophical Immigration Officer*, p196, in *Modernity and Identity*, edited by Jonathan Freedman and Scott Lash, Blackwell, Oxford, 1991, pp196-217 and Keupp, p28.

<sup>481</sup> Cf. Jenkins, p4.

<sup>482</sup> Cf. Smith 1991, pp160-1.

<sup>483</sup> On recognition and identity, see Keupp, p28.

<sup>484</sup> *The Social Construction of Reality*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966

me to be attentive to it in the fullest way. I experience everyday life in the state of being wide-awake. This wide-awake state of existing in and apprehending the reality of everyday life is taken by me to be normal and self-evident, that is, it constitutes my natural attitude.

I apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality. Its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem to be independent of my apprehension of them and that impose themselves upon the latter. The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of objects that have been designated *as* objects before my appearance on the scene. The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me”.<sup>485</sup>

The reality of everyday life is organised around the body and the present and is intersubjective.<sup>486</sup> In the course of our face-to-face dealings with others<sup>487</sup> we communicate through the medium of language, a symbolic system capable of generating “semantic fields”, or “zones of meaning”.<sup>488</sup>

“Within the semantic fields thus built up it is possible for both biographical and historical experience to be objectified, retained and accumulated. The accumulation, of course, is selective, with the semantic fields determining what will be retained and what “forgotten” of the total experience of both the individual and the society. By virtue of this accumulation a social stock of knowledge is constituted, which is transmitted from generation to generation and which is available to the individual in everyday life. I live in the common-sense world of everyday life equipped with specific bodies of knowledge. What is more, I know that others share at least part of this knowledge, and they know that I know this. My interaction with others in everyday life is, therefore, constantly affected by our common participation in the available social stock of knowledge”.<sup>489</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> *Construction*, pp35-36. Emphasis in original.

<sup>486</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp36-37.

<sup>487</sup> The face-to-face situation is accorded special status as the „prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivative of it” (p43).

<sup>488</sup> *Op. cit.*, p55.

<sup>489</sup> *Op. cit.*, p56. On the characteristics and function of the social stock of knowledge, see pp56-61.



It is the reciprocal action between society as objective and subjective reality, the use of common media of communication within shared symbolic universes<sup>490</sup> absorbed during primary socialisation,<sup>491</sup> maintenance and contribution to (expansion of) the shared stock of knowledge, participation in the processes of institutionalisation combined with a reification of the institutions inscribing them in nature that construct reality.<sup>492</sup> Far from implying tacit acquiescence to an overwhelming and oppressive given, the constructionist view opens the possibility of altering structures, changing attitudes, and contains an emancipatory potential that has been latched on to by feminists and numerous other critics of the dominant order.<sup>493</sup>

By highlighting the inherent relativity of all cultural suppositions<sup>494</sup> the liberating implications of this stance for the idea of the self emerge clearly:

“The genetic presuppositions for the self are, of course, given at birth. But the self, as it is experienced later as a subjectively and objectively recognizable identity, is not. The same social processes that determine the completion of the organism produce the self in its particular, culturally relative, form. The character of the self as a social product is not limited to the particular configuration the individual identifies as

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<sup>490</sup> On symbolic universes, see pp113-122.

<sup>491</sup> On primary socialization, see pp149-157.

<sup>492</sup> The authors are very careful to stress that institutions, in spite of their power, never completely take on a life of their own: “It is important to bear in mind that the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. The process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity is objectivation. The institutional world is objectivated human activity, and so is every single institution. In other words, despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from the human activity that produced it” (p78). In other words: “the relationship between man, the producer, and the social world, his product, is and remains a dialectical one. That is, man (not, of course, in isolation but in his collectivities) and his social world interact with each other. The product acts back upon the producer” (p78).

<sup>493</sup> See Kenneth J. Gergen, *Social Construction in Context*, Sage, London, 2001: „Constructionist critique was enormously appealing to many groups whose voices had been marginalized by science, and to all those whose powers of social equality and justice were otherwise thwarted by existing authorities of truth” (p8). See also *Op. cit.*, pp10-1 and, by the same author, *An Invitation to Social Construction*, Sage, London, 1999, pp62-89.

<sup>494</sup> On the relativity of knowledge, shared meanings, concepts of humanness and so on, see pp28, 67, 68, 70, 115, 125-6, 134, 155, 192, 197 and 199-200.

himself (for instance, as “a man”, in the particular way in which this identity is defined and formed in the culture in question), but to the comprehensive psychological equipment that serves as an appendage to the particular configuration (for instance, “manly” emotions, attitudes and even somatic reactions). It goes without saying, then, that the organism and, even more, the self cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they were shaped”.<sup>495</sup> Identity is not fixed for all time, but can be modified by the active operation of our will.<sup>496</sup>

Acquiring an identity begins with primary socialisation and is highly context-dependent:

“(...) identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only *along with* that world. Put differently, all identifications take place within horizons that imply a specific social world”.<sup>497</sup> Thus Berger and Luckmann’s concept of identity is one that encompasses a name, a place in society, a set of roles,<sup>498</sup> the internalization of a socially-agreed reality<sup>499</sup> and a personal biography integrated within a specific social structure.

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<sup>495</sup> *Op. cit.*, p68.

<sup>496</sup> This emerges more explicitly in later constructionist works, such as *Keupp* (for example on pp60 and 70-2) and Florian Strauss and Renate Höfer, *Entwicklungslinien alltäglicher Identitätsarbeit*, in *Identitätsarbeit*, pp270-307.

<sup>497</sup> *Op. cit.*, p152. Emphasis in original. As the authors remark, at the earliest stage of our lives we are assigned a name, a signifier of identity by our parents: “The child learns that he *is* what he is called. Every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies a designated social location. To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world” (p152, emphasis in original).

<sup>498</sup> Acquired during secondary socialization, see pp157-166. It should be noted in passing that Berger and Luckmann do not claim that socialization is everything: “On the other hand, there are always elements of subjective reality that have not originated in socialization, such as the awareness of one’s own body prior to and apart from any socially learned apprehensions of it. Subjective biography is not fully social. The individual apprehends himself as being both inside *and* outside society. This implies that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality is never a static, once-for-all state of affairs. It must always be produced and reproduced *in actu*. In other words, the relationship between the individual and the objective social world is like an ongoing balancing act” (p154, emphasis in the original).

<sup>499</sup> The common stock of knowledge and the institutions, cf. pp149-150.

Reiterating their definition at a later stage, they emphasize the relativity of identity even more clearly:

“Identity is, of course, a key element of subjective reality and, like all subjective reality, stands in a dialectical relationship with society. Identity is formed by social processes. Once crystallised, it is maintained, modified, or even reshaped by social relations. The social processes involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure. Conversely, the identities produced by the interplay of organism, individual consciousness and social structure react upon the given social structure, maintaining it, modifying it, or even reshaping it. Societies have histories in the course of which specific identities emerge; these histories are, however, made by men with specific identities”.<sup>500</sup>

A second theme contained in the above, the necessity of identity-maintenance, alludes to identity’s external dimension, the input of others in our appreciation of self. The crucial (reality-fixing) role of affirmation played by key members of our supportive networks does not become redundant following our formative years:

“But significant others occupy a central position in the economy of reality-maintenance. They are particularly important for the ongoing confirmation of that crucial element of reality we call identity. To retain confidence that he is indeed who he thinks he is, the individual requires not only the implicit confirmation of this identity that even casual everyday contacts will supply, but the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation that his significant others bestow on him”.<sup>501</sup>

Others with whom the individual has less intimate (and more formalized) relationships also play a part in this process, functioning as “a sort of chorus”.<sup>502</sup> This holds true even if the identity concerned is not one that he is fond of.<sup>503</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> *Op. cit.*, p194.

<sup>501</sup> *Op. cit.*, p170.

<sup>502</sup> *Construction*, p170.

<sup>503</sup> Berger and Luckmann are conscious of the problem of consistency that might arise if there is a discrepancy between the messages coming from significant others and the chorus respectively. This can be resolved by accepting a less comfortable version of reality or by terminating the relationship with the offending party or parties. Furthermore, the relationship between the significant others and the chorus is dialectical (“that is, they interact with each other as well as with the subjective reality they serve to confirm”, p171). For these discussions, see *Construction*, pp170-2.

In their report of face-to-face encounters, Berger and Luckmann introduce the concept of “typifications”. On the one hand, although the “embodied self”<sup>504</sup> can know himself better than he can anyone else, as his subjectivity is accessible to him in a way no-one else’s can ever be, this “knowing” entails reflection, an arresting of the continuous spontaneity of experience in order to turn attention back upon the self. Whilst the self is not immediately appresented to the individual, the other is. Knowing what he is does not call for a deliberative pause; it is ongoingly and prereflectively available. On the other hand, however, perception of the other is coloured by typificatory schemes, which are more “vulnerable” to his interference in face-to-face meetings than in “remoter” forms of interaction.<sup>505</sup> These schemes enable the individual to deal with the other, structuring behaviour in the course of a conversation or transaction. Unless challenged, the typifications will hold until further notice. The examples of typifications, which the authors give are revealing, including, in the initial discussion, “a European” and “an American”.<sup>506</sup> The typifications become progressively more anonymous the further away they are from the direct face-to-face situation.<sup>507</sup> Again, the example chosen, that of “my friend Henry” as an Englishman, is telling. Certain aspects of Henry’s conduct will be ascribed to the typification (tastes in food, manners and emotional reactions are cited). As long as he is present, he will break through the type and manifest himself as a unique individual. Once the friendship has become a thing of the past, the type becomes increasingly resistant to individualization of this kind. In superficial and transient exchanges (such as a chat with an Englishman on a train) or where face to face contact has never taken place (such as when a businessman is aware of his competitors in England, but has never met them), this tendency is more pronounced.<sup>508</sup> That Berger and Luckmann attach considerable importance to these typifications becomes apparent from their concluding remarks on the subject: “The social reality of

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<sup>504</sup> I have borrowed this term from Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society*, Second Edition, Sage, London, 1996 (henceforth *Turner*), p21.

<sup>505</sup> *Construction*, pp44-5. Cf. also *Jenkins* on categorisations, p83.

<sup>506</sup> *Op. cit.*, p45.

<sup>507</sup> *Op. cit.*, p46.

<sup>508</sup> *Construction*, p46.

everyday life is thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications, which are progressively anonymous as they are removed from the 'here and now' of the face-to-face situation. At one pole of the continuum are those others with whom I frequently and intensively interact in face-to-face situations – my 'inner circle', as it were. At the other pole are highly anonymous abstractions, which by their very nature can never be available in face-to-face interaction. Social structure is the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them. As such, social structure is an essential element of everyday life".<sup>509</sup>

The nation provides the unacknowledged setting for "everyday life" in Berger and Luckmann, as the illustrations used in conjunction with the typifications show.<sup>510</sup> Although this is the case and although they devote a considerable amount of effort to cataloguing the cognitive effects of institutions and their legitimating apparatuses,<sup>511</sup> they are curiously blind to the power of legitimating discourses in respect of

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<sup>509</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp47-8. The authors return to these arguments on pp194-5 where they talk about "identity types", engendered by specific historical social structure (with Americans and Frenchmen used as examples). This is a prelude to their point concerning the relativity of theories of identity (or "psychologies") within a given society: "Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society. Identity *types*, on the other hand, are social products *tout court*, relatively stable elements of objective social reality (the degree of stability being, of course, socially determined in its turn)" (p195, emphasis in the original).

<sup>510</sup> Contemporary society was the object of the treatise, and in 1966 its framework was the nation-state. Further instances in the text include p48 (on typifications of "those who have preceded and will follow me in the encompassing history of my society"; the "Founding Fathers"); p56 ("Participation in the social stock of knowledge thus permits the 'location' of individuals in a society and the 'handling' of them in the appropriate manner. This is not possible for one who does not participate in this knowledge, such as a foreigner, who may not recognize me as poor at all, perhaps because the criteria of poverty are quite different in his society". Here "country" can be substituted for "society" and "culture" for "social stock of knowledge" without the meaning being skewed); p57 (where "recipe knowledge" is explained by means of the example of applying for a passport); p60 (where the "relevance structure" is looked at in relation to America); pp169-70 (mentioning the "New Haven railroad", the "*New York Times*" and "Grand Central station" in a description of commuting). The nation is given its first mention on p161.

<sup>511</sup> On institutions and institutionalization, see pp65-109 and on legitimization, pp110-146. On p194, the authors explicitly state their aversion to the term "collective identity".

identity.<sup>512</sup> Whereas I fully agree with the social constructionists that identity is culturally and historically relative<sup>513</sup> and that individuals enjoy a certain degree of freedom in piecing together “copyright me”, three inhibiting factors come into play. The first is the principle of classification, which gives priority to an “identity of identities” to borrow Billig’s expression.<sup>514</sup> Even if it barely impinges on the consciousness, it is still present, demanding loyalty, silently (for the most part) guiding the course of our lives and shaping our attitudes. In short, construction begins where materiality ends.<sup>515</sup>

The second constraint is that of resources,<sup>516</sup> not merely economic (relative wealth), but also including social (class, networks) and cultural capital (level of education, skills and “refinement”).<sup>517</sup> The more resources an individual can mobilize, the greater the freedom of authorship he enjoys in determining his identity (although the

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<sup>512</sup> This is more obvious amongst Berger and Luckmann’s (postmodern) successors. Cf. *Keupp*, p87-8, where Hobsbawm’s invention of tradition stance is endorsed and national identities as “guarantees of coherence” are said to have lost much of their resonance and saliency.

<sup>513</sup> Cf. also *Keupp*, pp28 and 30.

<sup>514</sup> *Billig*, p10.

<sup>515</sup> The material identities in their capacity of core cultural discourses provide the framework within which life narratives unfold.

<sup>516</sup> Berger and Luckmann never explicitly mention inequalities in resource-accumulation. They come close to so doing in discussing the social distribution of knowledge resulting from the division of labour (on p157, they admit that some skills may be learned at an earlier age in “varying sectors” of society, with the (somewhat patronizing) example of an upper-class child being taught about the “facts of life” when a lower class child has mastered the rudiments of abortion technique and “class-based versions” are hinted at again on p158) and in their account of socialization (on p151 in relation to “double selectivity”, they write about “lower class” children and the “mood of contentment, resignation, bitter resentment, or seething rebelliousness” the lower class perspective might induce and on p161, concerning the crises that may occur after primary socialization, where “the older child comes to recognize that the world represented by his parents (...) is actually the world of uneducated, lower-class, rural Southerners”). *Keupp*, by contrast, does incorporate resources (including Bourdieu’s cultural and social capital) into the theoretical model, on pp19, 73, 100, 198-207 and 296, as well as pp180-1 and 186-8 on networks. See also Thomas Ahbe, *Ressourcen – Transformation – Identität*, in *Identitätsarbeit*, pp207-226.

<sup>517</sup> Thomas Ahbe, *op. cit.*, pp212-6 (on p215, Ahbe also mentions “regional resources” as a means of explaining why individuals are able to utilize accumulated capital to their advantage more effectively) and Bourdieu, *Ökonomisches Kapital, kulturelles Kapital, soziales Kapital*, in Reinhard Kreckel, *Soziale Ungleichheiten*, Verlag Otto Schwartz und Co., Göttingen, 1983, pp183-198.

principle of classification and ascription still limit the potential of even the most fortunate).<sup>518</sup>

The final problem is that of ascription.<sup>519</sup> Given that identity has both an internal and an external (social) component, the embodied individual never has a monopoly of self-definition.<sup>520</sup> The body itself is replete with social meanings, which are likely to influence the initial impression others have of us.<sup>521</sup>

On the collective level, groups within a society (such as the national minority of Hungarians in Romania or stateless nations within the administrative unit of a nation-state associated with a culturally and/or linguistically divergent majority) who are “marked out” by linguistic or other forms of difference are particularly vulnerable to stereotyping and prejudice. The power-imbalance in terms of self-definition is often to their detriment and can force them on to the defensive (if the surrounding

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<sup>518</sup> Cf. *Jenkins*, p51.

<sup>519</sup> Berger and Luckmann do touch upon this issue, for example on p161 where they write: “Some of the crises that occur after primary socialization are indeed caused by the recognition that the world of one’s parents is *not* the only world there is, but has a very specific social location, perhaps even one with a pejorative connection” (emphasis in original). Ascription as such only crops up in connection with unsuccessful socialization and “defective” identities (pp184–8), such as “a physical deformity that is socially stigmatized” and “a stigma based on social definition” (p184), with the cripple and the illegitimate child as the prototypes.

<sup>520</sup> As Jenkins neatly puts it: “Identity is often in the eye of the beholder” (*op. cit.*, p2). *Anomie*, the state of chronic disjuncture between the individual and those who surround him can seize us when the discrepancy between who we are told we are and who we know ourselves to be becomes unbearable. See Durkheim, *Suicide*, Routledge, London, 1970, pp288–289 and p382. Whence individuality when even our cognitive apparatus for deciphering the flood of sensory information that washes over us is provided by society in the shape of the habitus? In spite of habitus, we do not put exactly the same cast on events when we observe them, nor is the memory of shared experience stored in individual minds ever completely alike down to the very last detail. Moreover, we are embedded in different social networks, are born into separate family units and our particular combination of roles throughout our entire biography is never completely identical to anyone else’s. Cf. *Jenkins*, p136: “Individual identity is revealed as, to a considerable extent, a customised collage of collective identifications”.

<sup>521</sup> Cf. Turner on the self in contemporary society as “a representational self, whose value and meaning is ascribed to the individual by the shape and image of their external body, or more precisely, through their body image. The regulatory control of the body is now exercised through consumerism and the fashion industry rather than through religion” (p23). Cf also *Jenkins*, p20: “The human body is simultaneously a referent of individual continuity, an index of collective similarity and differentiation, and a canvas upon which identification can play”.

environment is intolerant or downright hostile towards them). It can therefore become a source of considerable anguish.

I would therefore propose a theory of identity that takes the aforementioned concerns into account.

There are certain elements of personal identity that are more resilient and resistant to change than others, that are so solid as to appear incontestable. As such, they belong to the doxa, the self-evident, the taken-for-granted. Their plausibility especially where they are employed in a wider system of classification, as is the case with national identity, emanates from their correspondence to natural phenomena recognised and exploited by our institutions. In order to comprehend fully the contextuality of identity, to discern what qualities an identity must possess before it can lodge itself so firmly in the individual mind that it becomes part of the doxa, and to appreciate better why some identities are so bitterly fought over, it is instructive to group identities under four headings that differ in two principle respects, their relative stability or self-evidence and the degree of volition involved in sustaining them. The headings are as follows: **material, functional, affective and circumstantial identity.**

Material identity is distinguished by its high degree of stability, deriving from its permanence. It is the least problematic to the individual mind, invested with the indisputable character of doxa. Material identity is the identity acquired by each individual at birth and through early acculturation (socialisation).<sup>522</sup> It therefore includes physical identity (skin colour, gender,<sup>523</sup> genetic propensities) and cultural

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<sup>522</sup> Cf. *Jenkins*, p21, on "primary identities".

<sup>523</sup> On gender as "primary identity", see *Jenkins*, pp49 and 62-4, and as a classificatory principle, *op. cit.*, pp60-1. I agree with Smith when he writes: „At the same time the very universality and all-encompassing nature of gender differentiation makes it a less cohesive and potent base for collective identification and mobilization. Despite the rise of feminism in specific countries, gender identity, which spans the globe, is inevitably more attenuated and taken for granted than other kinds of collective identity in the modern world. Geographically separated, divided by class and ethnically fragmented, gender cleavages must ally themselves to other, more cohesive identities if they are to inspire collective consciousness and action" (*Smith 1991*, p4). Gender is steeped in cultural connotations (see for example *Imagining Women: Cultural Representations and Gender*, edited by Frances Bonner, Lizbeth Goodman, Richard Allen, Linda Jones and Catherine King, Polity,



identity (habitus, religious, linguistic, ritual and possibly the *Weltanschauung* that is part and parcel of a way of life, though this is not nearly as firmly rooted as the rest and is therefore more vulnerable to the pressure of external circumstances as we have already ascertained). It may also include class identity (which extends far beyond simple economic identity since it produces a discrete habitus) in societies where class structure is rigid and where class is openly assigned priority as a boundary marker, limiting access to opportunity. In such societies, individual trajectories are directly circumscribed by class identity.<sup>524</sup> National identity may likewise be considered a material identity for reasons, which will be discussed below. With its strong cultural (habitus-generating) and affective components, it transcends its administrative function.<sup>525</sup>

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Cambridge, 1982 and *Nature, Culture and Gender*, edited by Carol MacCormack and Marilyn Strathern, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980). Rules, written and unwritten, lay down appropriate standards of behaviour for the sexes and assign roles accordingly (on differing conceptions of sexuality, see: *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality*, edited by Pat Caplan, Routledge, London, 1991 and on the assignment of roles and their normative dimension, see *Regulating Womanhood: Historical Essays on Marriage, Motherhood and Sexuality*, edited by Carol Smart, Routledge, London, 1992). Opportunities arise in line with the strictures of the rules and from the opportunities issue trajectories. Interestingly, Berger and Luckmann broach the subject of gender when pointing out that the contents of primary socialization are cultural-specific: „With language, and by means of it, various motivational and interpretative schemes are internalized as institutionally defined – wanting to act like a brave little boy, for instance, and assuming little boys to be naturally divided into the brave and the cowardly. These schemes provide the child with institutionalized programmes for everyday life, some immediately applicable to him, others anticipating conduct socially defined for later biographical stages” (*Construction*, p155). Unfortunately, they do not enlarge upon the concept of the schemes, nor do they contrast boys with girls. Prescriptions and prohibitions cluster densely around material identities precisely because they form the basis of classificatory schemes.

<sup>524</sup> Caste identity has a similar effect, though it is even less willing to admit exceptions. On castes and class, see T. H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1977, pp191-219. On the weakness of class compared with national identity, see *Smith 1991*, pp5-6 and my section on Communist identity below.

<sup>525</sup> All material identities stir our emotions. This affective reality makes us susceptible to manipulation. One way of persuading us that an identity is indeed material is to make us feel it, to activate it, so that it becomes palpable, tugging at our hearts. National identity is regularly reinforced by these means, primarily through ritual commemorations of a glorious shared past. Having said this, the very self-evidence of material identities reduces the intensity of their emotional appeal in the humdrum business of everyday life. This is dealt with in the passage on the solidarity paradox below.

Although all of these forms of identity may be altered by means of more or less drastic interventions (gender by surgery,<sup>526</sup> language by learning), although all may be rejected in the course of an individual's life, traces of them will always remain, they can never be completely effaced from the individual's mind, even if only in a negative capacity as an unpleasant memory or as a source of vitality and vigour for the replacement identity, standing for everything execrable that the substitute is not. In terms of volition, these identities rate very low; since they originate from outside, being imposed on the individual from the beginnings of conscious awareness before the individual was capable of questioning their relevance or validity for the self.

Functional identity, as its designation suggests, encompasses all the functions an individual fulfils in relation to others.<sup>527</sup> Its root, therefore, is social participation, whether on a small scale, such as within the intimate sphere of the family or within a wider setting, such as affiliation to a particular political party. Administrative (taxpayer, unemployed, person requiring a residence permit, in short every official category and permutation involving contact between the individual and the state and its representatives), legal (which covers citizenship and nationality alongside other identities which prescribe obligations as well as conferring certain rights),<sup>528</sup> religious (membership of a community of faith that subscribes to a moral code governing conduct), professional (stretching over a wide range of possibilities from

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<sup>526</sup> Cf. Keupp, pp88-9; Turner, pp20-1.

<sup>527</sup> Another way of conceptualizing functional identities is to consider the roles an "embodied self" plays in relation to others (although the correspondence is not exact, for which see below). Cf. Helga Bilden, *Das Individuum – ein dynamisches System vielfältiger Teil-Selbste*, in *Identitätsarbeit*, pp227-249, where she discusses "role-selves" (pp239-40).

<sup>528</sup> Brubaker explicitly ties citizenship to the rise of the state: "As a general, inclusive, immediate status, citizenship is the product of the development of the modern state in the direction of unitary internal sovereignty. This involved the monopolization of the powers of rule by a single central authority; the reconceptualization of the powers of rule, traditionally understood as a bundle of limited, discrete, particular rights, now conceived more abstractly as indivisible and unlimited; and the unification of law and administration through the creation of a single, internally homogenous, externally bounded legal and administrative space. As a result, the intricate and multiform geometry of political and legal membership was starkly simplified. Before the development of unitary internal sovereignty, jurisdiction was based largely on personal status, not on territory." *Citizenship*, p53.

straightforward employment for the purpose of providing for oneself and one's dependents to integration in a clearly delineated occupational group, entry to which is strictly regulated by exacting requirements in terms of qualifications and which cultivate an ethos or *esprit de corps*) and economic (relative prosperity and purchasing power which have repercussions on status and mobility) identities are essentially functional in nature. Their exact configuration and the extent to which they determine the lot of the individual hinges on the organisation and values of a society and on its tolerance for new ideas as well as its ability to sustain unexpected shocks such as abrupt economic collapse. Whereas, then, these identities are in principle more open to negotiation than their material counterparts, their acquisition still does not depend entirely on the determination and alacrity of the individual. Professional advancement, for example, is possible, but the initiative, skill and effort necessary for obtaining it are directly proportionate to the inbuilt, background resistance in the individual's social milieu.<sup>529</sup> Given that functions may be renounced or acquired more easily than is the case for material identities, the volition rating attached to functional identities is higher and their persistence or resilience is correspondingly less.

Functional identities also have a territorial and symbolic dimension that is clearly marked off in social space, in architecture.<sup>530</sup> We commute to our workplace, whether it be an office, a classroom or a factory, departing from the enclosed personalised haven of our homes, crammed with items we have deliberately chosen to surround ourselves with, which reflect our preferences and have sentimental value because of their associations, to enter an environment we occupy together with our colleagues, superiors and subordinates in which even the placing of modest tokens of our presence such as framed photographs of children may be physically impossible or meet with disapproval. The more important the individual office-holder, the greater the degree of segregation. Company directors, for example, are often housed on the top storey of buildings, imperiously surveying the hustle and bustle far below in luxuriously furnished premises reserved for them alone. Unwelcome distractions and

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<sup>529</sup> Cf. *Masculine Domination*, pp60-1 and 92-3.

<sup>530</sup> Cf. Denise L. Lawrence and Setha M. Low, *The Built Environment and Spatial Form*, in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 19, 1990, pp453-505.

disturbances are screened out, so all energies may be devoted to the task in hand. Many obstacles are strewn in the path of those who seek an audience with them; they have to pass by security desks and secretaries, through ante-rooms and doorways before being ushered into the inner sanctum.<sup>531</sup>

Uniforms are another symbolic representation of function and rank.<sup>532</sup> Donning a uniform is shedding individuality, becoming anonymous, being reduced to function. In uniform, you are a soldier, a policeman, a sailor, a waitress, a checkout assistant, a shelf-stacker, an assembly line worker, an employee at McDonald's, a doctor, etc. You are immediately categorised as such and deferred to or ordered about accordingly. There is no ambiguity in the dress code: you can neither hide what you do nor can you pretend to enjoy greater status than has been apportioned to you.<sup>533</sup>

The idea of "professionalism" is a symbolic indicator of the transition from one social space to another. Assuming your specialised functional identity forces other facets of your individuality into the background.<sup>534</sup> Personal considerations are not to intrude into the workplace. To deflect the charge of lack of professionalism, the individual must become a diminished self, utilising only those aptitudes called for by the job, forgetting for the duration of the commercial transaction that, apart from being, say, a lawyer or an architect, he is also a parent and an amateur singer or sports enthusiast, though he is always free to draw on knowledge and skills from outside work that may

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<sup>531</sup> Cf. Tim R. V. Davis, *The Influence of the Physical Environment in Offices*, in *The Academy of Management Review*, Volume 9 (2), 1984, pp271-283.

<sup>532</sup> Cf. Nathan Joseph and Nicholas Alex, *The Uniform: A Sociological Perspective*, in *The American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 77 (4), 1972, pp719-730.

<sup>533</sup> On the symbolic function of dress, see Michael G. Pratt and Anat Rafaeli, *Organizational Dress as a Symbol of Multilayered Social Identities*, in *Academy of Management Journal*, Volume 40 (4), 1987, pp862-898.

<sup>534</sup> Cf. *Construction*, p162, where Berger and Luckmann discuss the anonymity of roles ("they are readily detached from their individual performers"). The fact that they are the products of secondary socialization means that roles possess much less subjective inevitability: "This makes it possible to detach a part of the self and its concomitant reality as relevant only to the role-specific situation in question. The individual then establishes distance between his total self and its reality on the one hand, and the role-specific partial self and its reality on the other". Cf. also T. H. Marshall, *op.cit.*, pp158-179.

improve performance or the quality of work done. Individual conduct, in other words, is also affected by the standards of the workplace, so that the formal setting is complemented by rules, written into the contract of employment or left unstated, that facilitate communication and enforce the hierarchy.

That such demarcations in physical and symbolic space are not unique to economic activity and the division of labour, that their sole *raison d'être* is not the rational concentration of resources and equipment under one roof to maximise profit and efficiency may be shown by the site of a further functional identity, religious identity. The worshipper crosses a threshold into a consecrated, ceremonial space to commune with the divinity in a hushed, reverential attitude. The very act of stepping onto holy ground focuses thoughts on the spiritual, ordinary cares not so much banished as put in a different light, as problems for which the supplicant requests a remedy. It is precisely the ritualistic aspect of these boundaries of space and the modification in behaviour they induce that entitle us to maintain that functional identities are more than mere roles, that they warrant the name we give them.

It has already become apparent from the above that the presence of one type of identity under one heading does not automatically entail its exclusion from another. An identity may be located under more than one of the headings simultaneously. Sexual identity may serve as an illustration of this overlap. It combines various features, being at once material (gender and genetic predisposition), affective (emotional orientation) and functional (it preordains a certain lifestyle). Similarly, national identity contains a material (it is determined by the community and culture into which we are born), a functional (nationality and citizenship, administrative identity) and an affective component (the latter usually referred to as patriotism).<sup>535</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> Indeed, these mutually reinforcing multiple facets of national identity contribute to its saliency, or "materiality". On patriotism and its link with nationalism, see *Kedourie*, p68 where he argues as follows: „Patriotism, affection for one's country, or one's group, loyalty to its institutions and zeal for its defence, is a sentiment known among all kinds of men" and is neither dependent upon a particular anthropology, nor does it assert a particular doctrine of the state or the individual's relation to it. Nationalism, by contrast, does peddle a particular conception of the appropriate relationship between the two and „has annexed these universally held sentiments [of patriotism] to the service of a specific anthropology and metaphysic". Gellner slots patriotism neatly into his general theory: „What is being

Affective identities are the focus of the individual's affections, the locus of his emotional bonds. For this reason, their hold on the individual is strong and they can inspire feelings of well-being and pride, impart a sense of shared destiny, of community. They can comprise nurturing roles, such as parenthood, leisure activities, such as sports or hobbies (particularly where a forum exists for meeting fellow enthusiasts, either in person or virtually, as in online communities of computer gamers), in short any regular social interaction to which the individual is emotionally committed. Under this third heading, we encounter the highest level of volition; since an affective identity usually results from an act of will on the part of an individual. Although he may be compelled in practice to select from among a limited number of options with the further restrictions of background, education and experiences (our expectations being conditioned by habitus as general cultural and practical restraint in turn refined by adherence to the specific way of life), his choice is nonetheless a purposeful decision, an affirmation of the self.<sup>536</sup> It is also here that the whole issue of reality and identity comes to the fore. To the individual, identity is whatever he considers it to be. This perception may, however, be completely at variance with the opinion of society at large, dismissed as irrelevant or classed as self-deception (as in Nazi Germany when non-practising Jews were condemned because of their racial origin in spite of vehement protests that they were Germans first and foremost or that they had been baptised). What society designates as the determinant of identity may

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claimed is that nationalism is a very distinctive species of patriotism, and one which becomes pervasive and dominant only under certain social conditions, which in fact prevail in the modern world, and nowhere else. Nationalism is a species of patriotism distinguished by a few very important features: the units which this kind of patriotism, namely nationalism, favours with its loyalty, are culturally homogenous, based on a culture striving to be a high (literate) culture; they are large enough to sustain the hope of supporting the educational system which can keep a literate culture going; they are poorly endowed with rigid internal sub-groupings; their populations are anonymous, fluid and mobile, and they are unmediated; the individual belongs to them directly, in virtue of his cultural style, and not in virtue of membership of nested sub-groups. Homogeneity, literacy, anonymity are the key traits". Gellner, p138. Benedict Anderson's perceptive comments on patriotism as „political love" (p143) are to be found in *Imagined*, pp141-8.

<sup>536</sup> That the agent himself thinks of his choice as spontaneous and free is the supreme triumph of the doxa.

not coincide with the individual's notions of who he or she actually is.<sup>537</sup> One is a social fact, the other an individual reality. Both are equally valid, but where the perception of the individual clashes publicly with the collective consensus, the former usually yields, capitulating to the authority conferred by sheer weight of numbers. The individual may stubbornly cling to his cherished self-definition, but he can neither ignore nor escape outside pressures; he will forever be on the defensive, mindful of his isolation.

Affective identities are susceptible to the caprices of mood and whim, to setbacks and reversals of fortune.<sup>538</sup> This makes them intrinsically less sturdy than material identities though, paradoxically; they may be more precious to the individual<sup>539</sup> than all the others.

The final cluster of identities is the most ephemeral, cutting across everyday divisions and disparities of wealth or consecration and may be described as random or circumstantial identity. It embraces two scenarios: firstly where individuals are flung together by chance, such as passers-by who witness an accident, passengers on board a flight that ends in disaster or victims of some calamity such as an earthquake, landslide or flood,<sup>540</sup> or when they drift into a crowd at a gathering out of idle curiosity or prompted by vague stirrings of interest and secondly where they congregate to celebrate common convictions (say at an outdoor political rally or evangelising crusade) or to attend a sporting event as supporters of a team or a concert as devotees of a composer, conductor or hysterical fans of a popular band. Individual identity is cast aside; the participants merge into a group, each indistinguishable from the next. On dispersal, or on restoration of normality, some of the individuals will retain the defining identity of the group (victims, if they survive, may be scarred for

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<sup>537</sup> This is ascription, an identity being thrust upon the reluctant individual by society. Cf. Hoffman-Axthelm, *op. cit.*, p202, on the dual meaning of identity: "Identity is ascribed, attributed, and it is a proposition of external origin. Identity cannot be asserted as a matter of fact; nor can it be described as an assertion of being-within-itself of the identical". Cf. also *Jenkins*, p30.

<sup>538</sup> When surprise and disappointment make a way of life untenable, affective identities founder until a firm anchorage is once again secured by an alternative.

<sup>539</sup> See the argument on the solidarity paradox below.

<sup>540</sup> Cf. Kohn, *Idea*, p11.

life by the experience, so haunted by it that it shatters their convictions, altering their self-understanding for all time; for obsessed followers of sporting idols, collecting memorabilia and attending matches may become the entire purpose of life) whilst it will lose significance for others. Here we are confronted with the chameleon-like quality of identity. As individuals, we move from one context to the next, interacting in a giddy variety of social situations, yet we blend in with ease, rarely calling into question our basic assumptions about ourselves. It is the social context in which we find ourselves that decides which aspect of identity and hence which mode of conduct takes precedence over all the others.<sup>541</sup>

Material identities, then, are those which are most intimately bound to the self, they are in-corporated, they cannot be changed without changing the self. Ethnicity,<sup>542</sup> with its mystical union of blood and spirit, and nationalism as doctrines underpinning social institutions have succeeded in entrenching themselves to the extent that we routinely submit to their claims upon us, we identify ourselves with them, we consent to their classifications of ourselves and our fellows: they are part of us, assimilated as material. Why is it that more fleeting and flimsy identities (circumstantial and affective) can unleash such fierce passions, whilst the most secure and enduring (material) do not have this effect under normal conditions? I refer to this apparent enigma as the solidarity paradox. It is difficult to summon enthusiasm for that which is doxic, ineradicably the self but constant, neither spontaneous nor elective. We are not consulted about our material identities, they are foisted upon us. Because they are always present, they lack urgency; they are so obvious that they go unnoticed. Emotions themselves ebb and flow, love often succeeded by hate, old affections rekindled by a chance encounter; we are subject to mood swings, sometimes

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<sup>541</sup> To clarify: this is specific contextuality. The contextuality of identity, as of any other concept, is first to be sought in social organisation and institutions, the habitus and dispositions they nurture and the classifications they use.

<sup>542</sup> On ethnicity, see Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, Pluto Press, London, 1993; Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (editors), *Ethnicity*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1975; Stuart Hall, *Ethnicity: Identity and Difference*, in Geoff Eley and Ronald Gregor Suny (editors), *Becoming National*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, pp339-349 and Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism and Ethnicity*, in *Annual Review of Sociology* 19, 1993, pp211-239. Cf. also Jenkins, pp65-6.



depressed, sometimes euphoric. These fluctuations mean that it is well nigh impossible to prevent our ardour from flagging, even when its object is that which is dearest to us. Our material identities are banal by comparison, so it is hardly surprising that they do not enflame us except in circumstances where we perceive them as being under threat: any attack on them is viewed as an attack on the core of our being, on what we cherish most, mobilising our emotions in response.

Material identities do not occupy a prominent place in our thoughts because we know who we are. Similarly, they do not habitually make demands on our solidarity. We are too busy with other, more pressing concerns to expend valuable energies on them. They lurk in the background, informing our actions implicitly, the solidarity they are capable of invoking likewise condemned to the shades, dormant, latent, but never absent. This is true in spite of their tangibility. Our national identity is impressed upon us symbolically with such diverse tokens as passports, flags, anthems, frontier checks when we travel abroad, coins and notes.<sup>543</sup> Without these, it could not survive as a principle of classification, as its power of conviction would gradually decline. As a reflection of social reality, it must be periodically reaffirmed.<sup>544</sup>

The tangibility of functional identities is of a different order. They are more visible (the legal and administrative dimension of national identity only becomes apparent when we apply for a passport or land in trouble abroad, turning to the embassy or consulate for assistance, or to immigrants or refugees who want to become fully-fledged citizens of the host country, formally adopting its nationality<sup>545</sup>), often demarcated in physical as well as social space and they take up the bulk of our waking hours (at work and at home). They are the locus of our immediate preoccupations, our source of personal fulfilment. All of these factors make them more concentrated, more conducive to emotional involvement than material identities.

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<sup>543</sup> Cf. *Billig*, p41 and *Kemp*, p15. To this list postage stamps could be added, cf. *Kemp*, p119.

<sup>544</sup> *Elementary*, p429. Cf. the considerations on symbols, ritual and collective identity set out below. As we know, in order to be situated in the doxa, national identity must coincide with nature in some way.

<sup>545</sup> Cf. *Brubaker*, pp33-4.

Finally, to return to the outpourings of sentiment triggered by circumstantial identities, being caught up in a crowd enhances the effect already provoked by setting. Public rallies, demonstrations, protest marches and the like are all organised with the express intention of mobilising support, activating solidarity. Moreover, their principle aim is to harness the convictions of their converts to a cause, say, to avert a threat by putting on a show of strength, which amplifies the level of emotional intensity considerably.<sup>546</sup> Participation is usually down to personal choice and inclination. Thus, in contrast to material identities, circumstantial identities (apart from the sub-group of catastrophe victims) are highly volitional, stimulating a release of emotion that can assume cathartic proportions, but which does not automatically outlive its catalyst.<sup>547</sup>

## 2.3 The Body as Natural Boundary and Metaphor

Identity is subject to a process of growth and transformation analogous to the biological process of ageing undergone by the individual and is therefore not left unscathed by the ravages of time. The slow progression from birth to death entails many re-evaluations by the individual of himself. His mature understanding of his past, with the dual benefits of hindsight and enhanced appreciation of the motives of others will most likely diverge from his previous, callow view, but this does not undermine his certainty of the fundamental unity of the self.<sup>548</sup> The body itself is the natural metaphor of identity: our physicality separates us from others, producing an irreducible dichotomy. It is a frontier with the outside world, which cannot be crossed without our permission (rape is an invasion, a violation, an unauthorised

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<sup>546</sup> Other crowd-pullers, which we have already mentioned, such as football matches or concerts, also attract fans and aficionados, generating a great deal of infectious excitement.

<sup>547</sup> Before leaving the taxonomy of identities, one further group must be mentioned, that of political or ideological identities, functional, but also potentially affective. Propagandists portray it as material in much the same way as national identity, but they are faced with an additional difficulty, namely that, once the ideological identity has cleared the political field of its rivals, it no longer corresponds to anything in reality. This puts it at a considerable disadvantage compared with national identity, whose classification of difference has a firmer foundation in "nature". The most important example of an ideological identity for our purposes is Communist identity, for which see section 3.4 below.

<sup>548</sup> This feature is examined below together with continuity. Cf. *Jenkins*, pp45-6.

entry), our private territory, the one possession from which we cannot be parted.<sup>549</sup> Each body is a one-off, offering a unique perspective, confirming us in our individuality.

We acquire new layers of identity with the passage of time (functional identities being the case in point: we tend to accumulate them as we grow older, reaching a peak at retirement, after which we have fewer social responsibilities) and with the aggregation of experience.<sup>550</sup> Some of these changes are deemed by society to be of sufficient import to be marked by rites of passage. In these instances, the metamorphosis is accompanied by major social upheavals, with an entirely new role and burden of responsibilities within the community assumed by the individual agents.<sup>551</sup> The ceremonies that initiate the transformations reinforce the sense of a breaking off with the past, a biographical caesura.

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<sup>549</sup> Cf. Jonathan Glover, *I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1988, p83: "My frontiers are those of my body. I may be unconscious for periods, but I still exist: my body has a continuous path through space and time. It is what is perceived by others when they perceive me. And the special ways in which I am aware of my body are at least a large part of my own self-consciousness".

<sup>550</sup> Florian Straus and Renate Höfer draw attention to this phenomenon on p278 of *Identitätsarbeit*. Cf. also Mike Featherstone and Mike Hepworth, *The Mask of Ageing and the Postmodern Life Course*, in Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth and Bryan S. Turner (editors), *The Body, Social Processes and Cultural Theory*, Sage, London, 1991, pp371-389 and Bryan S. Turner, *Ageing, dying and death*, in Bryan S. Turner, *Medical Power and Social Knowledge*, Sage, London, 1987, pp111-130.

<sup>551</sup> Greater responsibilities often bestow enhanced status. Conversely, ceasing to play an active part in a community often leads to a loss of status. Youth and age, as we might expect from what we have already observed about the body as a site of social meaning, carry with them social connotations which colour our attitudes and behaviour. We are more lenient on young people for kicking over the traces once in a while, whereas age, which carries with it duties and obligations, is a more sober and serious state of being. Excess frivolity meets with censure, adults are supposed to set a good example, though it must be recalled that both the effect and the degree of this censure will be proportionate to the values prevalent in the society concerned. Youth and age have implications for identity, but also for autonomy: in our early years, we are legally placed under the tutelage of our parents and guardians. Decisions on our future are taken on our behalf by those appointed to protect our interests. The dwindling of physical and mental powers towards the end of life can again place us in a relationship of dependency with the ensuing reduction in autonomy. Retirement is as much an exclusion from the active life of production as it is a recognition of services rendered and a right to rest and leisure. Cf. Turner, pp29-30 and 33.

Identities atrophy and are outgrown independently of social recognition as they become irrelevant to our way of life (as may occur with religious identities when our convictions are tested beyond endurance by crisis or on coming into contact with alternative philosophies which better match our changed outlook). Our allegiances shift; our appreciation of who we are and the stuff of which we are made subtly adjusts as we take challenges in our stride; we adapt, absorb, make concessions. As has already been hinted, however, subjective identity, that is, whom we consider ourselves to be, may be at variance with external (socially designated) representations of our identity. Moreover, whereas the physical manifestation of material identity may remain constant, the values, associations and status imputed to it by society may be substantially modified. No detail is too trivial to escape society's attention; no attribute is value-neutral.<sup>552</sup>

Bearing all of the foregoing in mind, we may summarise our conclusions on the nature and social significance of identity as follows: identity is dynamic and interactive, the outcome of a continuous process of bargaining and negotiation whereby we invent and reinvent ourselves in relation to others. It is culture-specific and context-dependent. Within society, it may serve as a criterion for distributing or withholding benefits and advantages,<sup>553</sup> it may promote cohesion or sanctify division, justify integration or exclusion,<sup>554</sup> its efficacy contingent on striking a chord of sympathy within each individual. Identity is an organising principle (of classification) upon which both individual and collectivity base their definition of who they are, what they stand for and hence how to conduct themselves. In this way, identity guides us in our approach to others.<sup>555</sup> Without an identity, it is impossible to be

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<sup>552</sup> For example, left-handedness has been stigmatized in the past, for which see *Turner*, p8. Similarly, obesity attracts censure in contemporary society, for which see *Bodies Out of Bounds: Fatness and Transgression*, edited by Jana Evans Braziel and Kathleen Lebesco, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2001.

<sup>553</sup> Cf. *Brubaker*, pp24 and 29-31.

<sup>554</sup> Cf. *Jenkins*, pp80-1.

<sup>555</sup> Etiquette and protocol refine the rough and ready prescriptions of functional identity and class disparities. Clearly, greeting a President calls for greater formality and courtesy than greeting a

counted as fully human, to join in the life of society.<sup>556</sup> Identity is the bedrock upon which we ascribe significance to events; it is the quintessence of our conscious existence, the site of our emotional attachments. Concepts of common interest, ancestry, and heritage have capitalised on this aspect of identity to bind together large-scale collectivities, with no need for their individual members ever to have met or been more than dimly aware of each other's existence.<sup>557</sup>

## 2.4 Continuity and Identity

Continuity is essential to the establishment of an identity.<sup>558</sup> For the “embodied self”, continuity is axiomatic; the self is a sure reference, a fixed anchorage point. I cannot inhabit more than one physically bounded entity simultaneously and so I carry my identity with me from the cradle to the grave. Though my perspective on who I am alters almost imperceptibly throughout the course of the years, though circumstances may change radically around me, I persist. If I were to read excerpts from a diary I kept as a teenager, I might smile at my own naivety or feel a twinge of nostalgia for the days when the decisions that had to be taken were so simple and the dilemmas that I agonised over were so petty, I might, in short, be astonished at how little I resemble the person I once was, but this in itself would never cause me to doubt that I went through those experiences. Instead, I would look back on my former self as the seed from which my present self grew, concentrating more on the similarities than on the differences.<sup>559</sup>

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neighbour in the street or responding to a baffled tourist asking for directions. Cf. Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1982 (original publication 1967), pp47-95.

<sup>556</sup> Concentration camp victims, segregated from the rest of society, whose naked and starved bodies were literally and metaphorically stripped of every individualizing attribute, numbers tattooed on the skin replacing their names poignantly illustrate this. Their identity was systematically denied them, reducing them to suffering flesh as Hannah Arendt recognized (*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harcourt Brace and Company, San Diego, 1973, pp 438 and 453-4).

<sup>557</sup> Cf. Benedict Anderson, pp6 and 35.

<sup>558</sup> For an opposing view of continuity and identity, see Geoffrey Madell, *The Identity of the Self*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1981, pp49-77 and 108-140.

<sup>559</sup> That function can be suggestive of continuity was noticed by Hume in his *Treatise of Human Nature*, where he writes on pages 305 to 306 of Book One: “In like manner, it may be said without

Memory, by linking together the past and the present self, persuades us of continuity.<sup>560</sup> Hume accentuated its importance: "For what is memory, but a faculty, by which we raise up the images of past perceptions? And as an image necessarily resembles its object, must not the frequent placing of these resembling perceptions in the chain of thought, convey the imagination more easily from one link to another, and make the whole seem like the continuance of one object? In this particular, then, the memory not only discovers the identity, but also contributes to its production, by producing the relation of resemblance among the perceptions. The case is the same whether we consider ourselves or others.

"[...] Had we no memory, we should never have any notion of causation, nor consequently of that chain of causes and effects, which constitute our self or person. But having once acquir'd this notion of causation from the memory, we can extend the same chain of causes, and consequently the identity of our persons beyond our memory, and can comprehend times, and circumstances, and actions, which we have entirely forgot, but suppose in general to have existed. [...] memory does not so much *produce as discover* personal identity, by shewing us the relation of cause and effect among our different perceptions."<sup>561</sup>

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breach of the propriety of language, that such a church, which was formerly of brick, fell to ruin, and that the parish rebuilt the same church of free-stone, and according to modern architecture. Here neither the form nor the materials are the same, nor is there any thing common to the two objects, but their relation to the inhabitants of the parish; and yet this alone is sufficient to make us denominate them the same."

<sup>560</sup> A recent fictional illustration of the intimate relationship between memory and identity is to be found in the film *Blade Runner*, where the nightmare of technology run wild coupled with the love of gain has led to a situation in which memory has been cynically reduced to a commodity, implanted in androids in order to make them more emotionally stable and compliant. There can no longer be any true self-knowledge: where consciousness has been tampered with, the individual can never be entirely sure whether his identity is really his or whether his most cherished recollections were stolen from someone else. Cf. also John R. Gillis (editor), *Commemorations*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994 (henceforth *Commemorations*), p3: „The core meaning of any individual or group identity, namely, a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by remembering; and what is remembered is defined by the assumed identity”.

<sup>561</sup> *Hume*, pp 308-310, emphasis in the original. Memory is notorious for its selectivity. Where traumatic, the tiniest details are often preserved with unsurpassed clarity and freshness. Where it

Collective identities,<sup>562</sup> such as national identity, have to be maintained and reproduced to compensate for the lack of the direct, physical continuity of the “embodied self”.<sup>563</sup> Although they exist as a social fact, a sense of continuity over time and communality linking individuals in a meaningful relationship in spite of manifest social divisions and inequalities has to be manufactured using a combination of symbols, rituals and representations as constant reminders.<sup>564</sup>

Ritual is as crucial to the maintenance of a collective identity as memory is to the individual. Our collective identities and loyalties must be renewed and revitalised, as Durkheim recognised: "Let the idea of society be extinguished in individual minds, let the beliefs, traditions, and aspirations of the collectivity be felt and shared by individuals no longer, and the society will die. Thus we can repeat about society what was previously said about the deity: It has reality only to the extent that it has a place in human consciousnesses, and that place is made for society by us."

"There can be no society that does not experience the need at regular intervals to maintain and strengthen the collective feelings and ideas that provide its coherence and its distinct individuality. This moral remaking can be achieved only through

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stretches over a long period, mood and atmosphere are often recollected at the expense of details, which merge. Precisely what is destined for long-term storage and what is consigned to oblivion depends on a number of factors, including the aforementioned trauma, but social context (including habitus) and the way of life perform an initial selection for us by providing us with criteria of relevance. For an alternative account of the origin of causation with a more pronounced sociological flavour, see Durkheim, *Elementary*, pp367-373.

<sup>562</sup> On collective identities, see Niethammer and Jürgen Straub, *Personale und kollektive Identität. Zur Analyse eines theoretischen Begriffs*, in Aleida Assmann and Heidrun Friese, *Identitäten*, Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 1998, pp73-104.

<sup>563</sup> Cf. Jenkins, p83: "the boundedness of a collectivity is different in kind from the bodily integrity of an individual. Where a collectivity begins and ends is not mappable using the sociometric equivalent of a dressmaker's tape".

<sup>564</sup> Cf. *Commemorations*, pp5, 7-16 and 19. For the concept of social memory, see James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, especially pp1-40.

meetings, assemblies, and congregations in which the individuals, pressing close to one another, reaffirm in common their common sentiments."<sup>565</sup>

Ritual supplies both a framework and a motivation for these gatherings, permeating every aspect of collective life. Military parades, the special honours accorded to visiting heads of state, the laying of wreaths at war memorials, all are calculated to remind us of who we are. The strength of rituals lies partly in their use of symbols as a kind of cultural short-hand and partly in their highly formalised nature that lays down strict rules for participation, removing them from the ordinary and the everyday, setting them apart. Props, such as bright banners and music rouse the emotions. As Kertzer points out: "Rituals do not simply excite, they also instruct. But the potency of that instruction depends heavily on the power of ritual to place the individual in a receptive frame of mind. Sensory devices of all kinds are used to affect a person's emotional state, from rhythmic chanting to stylised dancing and marching, from powerful singing to the doleful tolling of bells. The most effective rituals have an emotionally compelling quality to them: they involve not just part of the personality but the whole personality. In the intensity of ritual, people focus their attention on a limited range of symbols. The greater their emotional involvement the more the rest of the universe is obliterated and the more the symbols embodied in the rite become authoritative."<sup>566</sup>

The very fact that rituals are intended for repetition and remain unaltered over centuries imbues them with solemnity, forging a link between ourselves and our ancestors who performed them long before we were born, thereby instilling a sense of continuity over time analogous to that of the "embodied self".<sup>567</sup>

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<sup>565</sup> *Elementary*, pp351 and 429 respectively.

<sup>566</sup> Kertzer, pp99-100.

<sup>567</sup> Identification of rituals with the establishment, the powers-that-be, can loosen their grip on the individual once a crisis of faith has set in, when disillusionment with former ideals strips the ritual of meaning, giving it the appearance of a hollow instrument of control, a sterile, reflexive and uncritical genuflection to a system that hoodwinks the weak-minded. In such instances, the mantra-like quality of ritual becomes directly counter-productive, itself a source of alienation and contempt, hence the charge that it amounts to nothing more than superstition, mass delusion, a barrier to the exercise of reason and to progress.



Ritual solidifies identity by making it tangible: seeing is believing. We more readily accept the proposition that, in spite of real conflicts of interest in the scramble for money or position, there are indeed ties of a different order that bind us to each other. It is no accident that many of the examples of ritual cited above commemorate events in the life of the nation. National identity relies heavily on ritual to convince us of its materiality, overcoming our doubts. To understand why it has become so widespread, outlasting its competitors, we must seek an answer in its substance as the principle of classification favoured by an institution with a distinctive thought-style, that of the nation-state.

That we have a propensity to think by association has already been mentioned. Classification would be impossible without it. Precision is sacrificed for the sake of ease and taking shortcuts, resulting in a cognitive blur that compresses vast amounts of information into a few categories. Symbols have an obvious affinity with these categorisations, concentrating multiple meanings with great economy, suiting them for a wide range of applications. We merely have to select the quality we wish to emphasise. They convey messages vividly, succinctly and with immediacy; we do not have to take pains pondering why they suggest themselves to us, they are constantly available. It is not, however, the innate flexibility of symbols that makes them indispensable: "It is a well-known fact that the feelings a thing arouses in us are spontaneously transmitted to the symbol that represents it. (...) This transfer of feelings takes place because the idea of the thing and the idea of the symbol are closely associated in our minds. As a result, the feelings evoked by one spread contagiously to the other. This contagion, which occurs in all cases to some extent, is much more complete and pronounced whenever the symbol is something simple, well defined, and easily imagined. But the thing itself is difficult for the mind to comprehend - given its dimensions, the number of its parts, and the complexity of their organisation. We cannot detect the source of the strong feelings we have in an abstract entity that we can imagine only with difficulty and in a jumbled way. We can comprehend those feelings only in connection with a concrete object whose reality we feel intensely. Thus if the thing itself does not meet this requirement, it cannot serve as a mooring for the impressions felt, even for those impressions it has itself aroused. The symbol thus takes the place of the thing, and the emotions aroused are transferred

to the symbol. It is the symbol that is loved, feared, and respected. It is to the symbol that one is grateful."<sup>568</sup> Thus Durkheim. Unless a principle is made tangible, visible, it will cease to retain its hold on individual minds. Although its promptings are obeyed without conscious reflection, it cannot remain self-evident if it is not constantly activated. Symbols articulate the underlying reality of our actions and in so doing actually become constitutive of it. For this reason, strategic deployment of symbols is indispensable for the maintenance of collective identity.<sup>569</sup>

Representations are the third means of consolidating and upholding a collective identity. As they will be dealt with in depth later, they need not detain us further here. I would simply observe at this juncture that history, the written record of the deeds of the collectivity, is synonymous with public memory and, as such, it occupies a privileged position amongst representations.<sup>570</sup>

### ***Section Three: National Identity, Minority Identity, Communist Identity.***

#### **3.1 National Identity as a Principle of Classification**

"The human mind is of a very imitative nature; nor is it possible for any set of men to converse often together, without acquiring a similitude of manner, and communicating to each other their vices as well as their virtues. The propensity to company and society is strong in all rational creatures; and the same disposition, which gives us this propensity, makes us enter deeply into each other's sentiments, and causes like passions and inclinations to run, as it were, by contagion, through the whole club or knot of companions. Where a number of men are united into one political body, the occasions of their intercourse must be so frequent for defence, commerce and government, that, together with the same speech or language, they

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<sup>568</sup> Durkheim, *Elementary*, pp221-222. See also *op. cit.*, p443 for tangibility. Cf. Bourdieu, *Outline*, pp 89 and 94 for a discussion on how the principles are reflected in the social organisation of space and time and leave their mark upon the body.

<sup>569</sup> Cf. Billig, pp39-43 and pp85-7.

<sup>570</sup> Cf. Jenkins, p28: "Social continuity necessitates the positing of a meaningful past".

must acquire a resemblance in their manners, and have a common or national character, as well as a personal one, peculiar to each individual".<sup>571</sup> Hume acknowledges both the social origin of notions of national character and their inextricable link to a certain form of government, the nation state. National identity is the principle of classification employed by nation states in their capacity as institutions forming part of a legitimating strategy designed to perpetuate their grip on the consciousness of the collectivity governed. The basic dichotomy, that between those who belong to the nation and therefore act as repositories of the national essence and those who do not, bears a close resemblance to the irreducible distinction between "embodied selves" (I and you). Although this element is present in the establishment of boundary markers the classification represents the preferred natural metaphors are of kinship and family ties (shared blood and traits) and of the human body, with a variety of component parts making up a cohesive and organic whole, harmoniously sustaining life and well being.<sup>572</sup> Emphasis is placed on what is held in common, ranging from outlook and temperament to culture and revered organisational structures. This allows for disparities of wealth and privilege to exist without the fundamental concept of a unifying sameness being removed from the invisible, taken for granted realm of doxa. Hence the ease with which these potential sources of antagonism and division can be set aside in times of crisis (*Burgfrieden*). The particular feature singled out as the primary indicator of national uniqueness for purposes of inclusion or exclusion varies according to the needs of a given collectivity at a given juncture in history and can be more or less abstract (encompassing for example language or birthplace of parents). The cognitive trompe-l'oeil performed by nationalism is to convince us of the materiality of our national identity, since it is contrived as corresponding to external phenomena in nature rather than merely arising from an administrative imperative.<sup>573</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> David Hume, *Of National Characters*, in *Selected Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1993, p115.

<sup>572</sup> On kinship, see *Jenkins*, p64.

<sup>573</sup> The mere fact that citizenship may be awarded does not suffice to undermine the core assumption. The recognition of suitability to be included in the polity is linked to stringent demands such as clean criminal record and usually is "earned" over a long period of "naturalisation", implying at least a degree of integration into the dominant culture and acceptance of indigenous traditions of governance, law and customs. It could be described in terms of acquiring "spiritual kinship". Since nationalism

The functional aspect of national identity reinforces the underlying principle by providing visible, solid tokens of membership of the collectivity such as bank notes, coins, flags and passports.<sup>574</sup> Likewise, attachment to these symbols, the feelings of loyalty they inspire, the bond between subject and locality leading to the transformation of the physical landscape into territorial or proprietorial space and ritual reminders of organic contiguity and temporal continuity, congealing as the affective component of national identity, further enhance the persuasive power of the fundamental premise and are consciously manipulated by the state.

The anachronistic tendency of established nation states to claim immanence throughout history results partly from the application of the principle of classification itself (its inexorable spread to subdue all of reality including the past) and partly from their nature as institutions. As Douglas points out: "institutions survive by harnessing all information processes to the task of establishing themselves. The instituted community blocks personal curiosity, organises public memory, and heroically imposes certainty on uncertainty".<sup>575</sup>

Moreover: "Conscious tinkering and remaking is only a small part of the shaping of the past. When we look closely at the construction of past time, we find that the process has very little to do with the past and everything to do with the present. Institutions create shadowed places in which nothing can be seen and no questions asked.

(...) History emerges in an unintended shape as a result of practices directed to immediate practical ends".<sup>576</sup>

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consists of the endorsement and practical application of the principle of classification that sets members of a national collectivity apart from all others by acknowledging that they are qualitatively different in some way, seeking to catalogue varying types of nationalism is an ultimately fruitless endeavour. The observable variations are of emphasis given that the principle of classification itself is immutable: us and them. Adaptations of its use are more indicative of the requirements of a different social context than of a different strain of nationalism itself. Cf. Brubaker, *Citizenship*, pp33-4. Cf. also Gellner 1996, p99 where he writes, albeit on agrarian society's relationship to nature: "nature not merely provides a modest but fairly constant material provision, but somehow underwrites, justifies the social order, and mirrors its arrangements" and Kohn, *Idea*, p21.

<sup>574</sup> Cf. Billig, p41.

<sup>575</sup> Douglas, *Institutions*, p102.

<sup>576</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 69-70.

In conditions where a given principle of classification holds sway, particularly where it functions as the legitimating argument of an institution, the past becomes a malleable resource, a treasure trove of mythic heroes and defining moments and as the present is relentlessly projected backwards in a quest for affirming antecedents the interpretation of history reflects the urgent concerns of the here and now becoming the art of revealing origins, portraying ancestral struggles as part of an inexorable forward movement (often hampered by delays and other obstructions) culminating in the current forms of government. Thus history is imbued with purpose, it represents progress towards a reality attained and is tangled up with notions of destiny and inevitability.

In stark contrast to the constructionist stance, for nationalism (most obviously in its “organic” manifestation)<sup>577</sup> identity is destiny. Certainty is the order of the day. The national essence is inherited; it consists of a set of predispositions, characteristics transmitted from parents to children in unbroken succession. The persuasive power, what I would dub the alchemy of nationalism, derives from a combination of its exploitation of the natural metaphors of kinship and blood ties alluded to above and the self-evident quality of belonging to the doxa, the unnoticed mental furniture of assumptions.<sup>578</sup>

To reiterate: under nationalism, the principle of classification founded on nationhood is applied in such a way that national identity (the outward expression of cultural difference, frequently associated with territorially bounded administrative units in the form of states, though this is not a prerequisite) is invested with a material quality, in

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<sup>577</sup> *Myths*, p3. As we have seen in the course of the discussion of Brubaker, even in societies where blood ties are not emphasized, citizenship is still the basis for granting or withholding vital rights and benefits.

<sup>578</sup> Cf. *Billig*, pp8-10, 15, 17, 29, 37, 44-5, 51-5, 103 and 174-7 and *Szporluk*, p166. Cf. also *Gellner*, p125 on the persuasive hold nationalism exerts: “Nationalism (...) is indeed inscribed neither in the nature of things, nor in the hearts of men, nor in the pre-conditions of social life in general, and the contention that it *is* so inscribed is a falsehood which nationalist doctrine has succeeded in presenting as self-evident”. On p126, he comes back to the theme: “The key idea is in any case so very simple and easy that anyone can make it up at almost any time, which is partly why nationalism can claim that nationalism is *always* natural. What matters is whether the conditions of life are such as to make the idea seem compelling, rather than, as it is in most other situations, absurd”. In both quotations, emphasis in original.

other words that national identity represents a material difference between members of the nation and outsiders (cultural difference conflated with material "essence"). As regards their function principles of classification are always identical in that they draw boundaries between "us" and "them", here separating those who belong to the nation and those who do not. The permeability of these boundaries is not inscribed in the principle of classification itself, however, but is strictly context-determined according to the values of each society and the relative importance attached to kindred concepts such as nationality, ethnicity and race. Nationhood is the principle of classification expressed through nationalism, which both creates national identity and attributes pre-eminence to it, ranking it alongside other material identities as betokening absolute difference.

### **3.2 Nationalism and the State**

Where nationalism provides the unifying concept the state embodies its principle of classification, appropriating it for its own ends. In accordance with the internal logic of the principle the state must present itself as fulfilling a certain role, styling itself as the guardian and benevolent custodian of the essence of the collectivity. Its source of legitimacy derives from its intimate relationship with and proximity to its subjects: the decision-makers within the apparatus of state were born into the collectivity and their complete immersion in its lore, customs, traditions and mode of thought places them in a uniquely privileged position in terms of articulating its concerns and implementing its will. In short national officials and rulers simply by virtue of being home-grown are sensitive to subtleties that would be lost on "outsiders". Foreign rule is therefore pernicious by definition and becomes synonymous with oppressive domination: alien usurpers are out of tune with the nation, ignorant of what is best for it and have proven by the very act of conquest that their primary motivation does not reside in defending its heritage. Against this backdrop, self-determination assumes a deeply moral quality as an expression of justice. This is, of course, the ideal, the perfect image of what a nation-state should be and how it should behave. Nevertheless, it is precisely the "pure", mythologized form that has served as the legitimation of the nation-state as building-blocks of the international system,

permitting majority populations to ignore the querulous demands of minorities or sub-state nations where convenient.

In its allocative and organisational capacities the nation-state creates the most favourable conditions for its own reproduction through for example its distribution of resources to promote approved cultural manifestations or by structuring the educational system in such a way as to facilitate transmission of the doxa, defining the parameters within which thought can take place.

The nationalist ideal, that of complete structural homology between the administrative reach of the state and the territory inhabited by those deemed to be members of the nation by whatever yardstick, all too often proved unattainable and illusory.<sup>579</sup> Such uncomfortable realities could be sidestepped by recourse to ethnicity, a means of conceptualising absolute material difference without depending on artificial frontiers. This principle of classification demotes citizenship and administrative nationality to the status of a mere legal niceties, irrelevant in the face of more profound spiritual (transcendental) and ancestral (blood) ties. As we shall see, stressing ethnicity can be aimed at justifying the maintenance of cultural links with the lost mother country, the homeland of the ethnic group, offering succour and sustenance to the unfortunate exiles or at denying rights reserved for the majority collectivity on grounds of innate inferiority or otherness.

### 3.3 Minority Identity

Minority identity assumes its contours in relation to the existence of nation states, of national frontiers. Minorities may comprise inter alia racial, religious, linguistic, ideological or other self-defined groups or subcultures within a national collectivity yet whose affiliation to that collectivity is not called into question;<sup>580</sup> separatists (regarding themselves as stateless nations striving towards administrative independence within a delineated territory attached to a recognised nation state whose claims are resisted by that state); diaspora "latent nations" without a homeland (such

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<sup>579</sup> Cf. *Gellner*, p1.

<sup>580</sup> In other words, they possess divergent functional or affective identities but remain firmly situated within the collectivity in terms of their primary material identity.

as the Roma in Central Europe, scattered throughout many countries, with no uniform culture or language - as the example of Hungary alone illustrates, distinctions can be drawn even within the borders of a single state, as the Roma there separate themselves into three groups, the Romungro, Hungarian native speakers with a long-standing tradition of working as musicians in the noble houses, the beás, who fled Romania following the abolition of serfdom fearing that the decision could be reversed and whose language is a variant of Old Romanian and the lovári, who migrated to Hungary from the Indian subcontinent - are in general are pariahs within the "host" nation, relegated to the ranks of a despised underclass, although attitudes towards them can admit to a grudging affection when their indigenusness is nevertheless conceded, betraying a deep ambivalence on the issue of what constitutes their material identity) and national minorities (amputated from the main body of the nation through revision of frontiers rather than migrating of their own volition). This latter category is the one to which the Hungarians of Transylvania belong and which therefore merits examination in greater detail.<sup>581</sup>

National minorities are considered by the international community to be vulnerable and their identities fragile, as evidenced by the proliferation of agreements, treaty annexes and conventions designed to afford them a minimum of protection and rights. Thus national minorities are viewed as a distinct entity within the broader society in which they live. Legally they are the subjects of a given state, but citizenship takes no account of the specific cultural, linguistic or other requirements stemming from their autonomous identity. They are recognised, in other words, as being materially different from their compatriots, yet they are situated beyond the territory occupied by those with whom they are presumed to have the greatest affinity, the nationals of the mother country. Atrophy and decline are almost inevitable concomitants of severance: vitality and growth can be guaranteed solely by endogenous rule. The

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<sup>581</sup> That the reversal of fortune, which befell the Hungarians and others in the same situation could be particularly hard to bear was recognized by Gellner: "And the *nouvelles minorités*, so to speak, those who suddenly had minority status and hence irredentist sentiment thrust upon them, were often members of the previous culturally dominant ethnic or linguistic group, not habituated to such a lowly position, and hence more liable to resent it, and better equipped to resist it. They could find help and encouragement in their home state, which was dedicated to their own culture. They at any rate did not need to reconstruct, revive or invent past national greatness: it was, only too painfully, a matter of living recollection" (Gellner 1996, pp117-8).



process of decay will only be accelerated where the minority is unable to or is prevented from cultivating and expressing its true essence. The state to which the national minority owes allegiance as subjects is at best indifferent to its assertion of otherness and at worst directly inimical to it. Collective rights aim to redress the power imbalance inherent in national minority status (by virtue of unequal access to state-distributed resources and representation deficits) and attempt to arrest the erosion of the minority identity by creating a mutually approved space within which it may unfurl.<sup>582</sup>

Within the context of the beneficiary state<sup>583</sup> by contrast the materiality of the national minority identity represents the main focus, both within the minority community itself (self-definition) and amongst the wider majority. Awareness of recent history, lack of a shared language, religion and the like attach to the doxa-driven perception of difference. In the face of this overwhelming otherness the authorities may choose between integration (incorporation into the national body, displaying tolerance and openness to difference by permitting a degree of cultural or even administrative autonomy), assimilation (complete absorption into the national body, enforcing majority adherence by eliminating the visible indicators of difference and thereby attacking the materiality of the identity itself) and outright persecution (refused admission to the national body in any form, isolation, stigmatisation and exploitation as a scapegoat for national woes).<sup>584</sup> The assimilation strategy may involve imposing

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<sup>582</sup> Clearly these concepts are rooted in an acceptance of the nationalist principle of classification, evolving from its aversion to an imperfect fit between nation and territorial extent.

<sup>583</sup> The state which has been awarded or otherwise acquired the lands inhabited by the national minority.

<sup>584</sup> Cf. *Gellner*, p2, where he ponders the fate of „non-nationals”: „a territorial political unit can become ethnically homogenous, in such cases, if it either kills, or expels, or assimilates all non-nationals”. See also p98 where he deals explicitly with „classical Habsburg” nationalism: „Non-speakers of the new culture who happen to live in the territory now controlled by the new state themselves in turn face the options of assimilation, irredentist effort, emigration, disagreeable minority status and physical liquidation”. His most detailed examination of this issue is to be found in *Gellner 1996*, pp115-6, where, in covering the national irredentist period between 1815 and 1918, he looks at how convergence between culture and state can be secured.. Indeed: „One way of establishing a typology of the manner in which the world-without-nationalism has been transformed into a nationalist world is in terms of the concrete method used for the tidying up of the ethnic-political map” (p116). In his essay *Ethnic Nationalism and the Plight of Minorities (Myths*, pp187-202), Smith points out that homogenization antedates the rise of nationalism. However, ethnic nationalism increases the pressure on minorities

a definition on the minority, stripping it of the right to determine its own proper place and source of internal cohesion.

National minority identity thus includes an external (international community and mother country) and an internal (prevailing attitudes of the dominant national collectivity and self-awareness within the minority) dimension. It is a complex, contested identity and a locus of struggle over the right of definition (sometimes presented as moral truth or authenticity) from which all subsequent claims to native language teaching and other separate entitlements flow. That the mere existence of a national minority can be apprehended by the beneficiary state as a threat arises from the challenge it poses to the doxa by revealing the essential arbitrariness of frontiers and opening up the possibility of restitution.<sup>585</sup> The minority's loyalties are torn in two directions, calling exclusive and exclusionist models of sovereignty into question. It is precisely this duality, which is considered so dangerous. Furthermore the identity itself justifies entry into the political sphere (making its presence felt in the field of power) as a means of defending the values held dear by the minority community against possible depredations and of competing to obtain a fair share in financial allocations to education and culture from the central and local budgets.

### 3.4 Communist Identity

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with its tendency „to single out and categorize minorities within as 'alien' to the historic culture-community. Since the latter is seen as pure and authentic, non-members within are inevitably cast as counter-types and become targets of suspicion and hostility. Where there is also significant ethnic competition in labour markets, housing and education opportunities, the process of targeting is intensified and rationalized. Not only are jobs and houses reserved for members of the dominant *ethnie* and its authentic culture, aliens within become politically suspect and vulnerable. In these circumstances, they may be discriminated against, harassed, segregated and finally expelled, or even exterminated" (*Myths*, pp197-8). See also *Guibernau*, pp59-62 on „legitimate" and „illegitimate" states and pp87-8 on the power imbalance between majorities and minorities.

<sup>585</sup> From a nationalist vantage point any frontiers that do not respect geographical distributions of national populations are an artificial construct violating a fundamental principle of justice. Arbitrariness also comprises a realisation that such classifications are themselves socially agreed constructs and are not endowed with universal or absolute validity.

Walter Kemp, in *Nationalism and Communism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*<sup>586</sup> differentiates between classical Marxism, a socio-political ideal and “really-existing socialism” or Stalinism, a twentieth century political movement in defining communism. A third element, Marxism-Leninism acts as a link between the two.<sup>587</sup> Thus the term “Communism” as colloquially used<sup>588</sup> masks a distinction between a political ideology (whose main tenets were the fruit of Marx and Engels’ intellectual labours)<sup>589</sup> and a set of practices, which first developed in Russia as the country where a successful Marxist revolution assumed power.<sup>590</sup> Following the heady days of the Bolshevik victory, Lenin and his followers had to cope with the hostility of capitalist neighbours, a threat that did not disappear. The response to it eventually assumed the guise of ‘really existing socialism’, crystallizing in the USSR in the 1930s and exported to Central Europe in the second half of the 1940s where it survived until the end of the 1980s.<sup>591</sup> Kemp describes it as follows: “It was characterized by the hierarchically organized control of all aspects of social, political, economic and cultural life, regulated by a narrow oligarchy seated at the apex of the party and state apparatuses, the *nomenklatura*. Although socialist and democratic in theory, it tended to be uncompromising and authoritarian in practice. Reaching its zenith under Stalin, Communism and the monolithism it sought to impose ‘was the political reflection of

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<sup>586</sup> For bibliographical details, see footnote 414 on p103 above.

<sup>587</sup> Kemp, pp2-3. This is taken from Geoffrey Stern whose elegant shorthand for drawing the distinction involves giving the former a small and the latter a capital ‘c’ and is adopted by Kemp throughout. Cf. Nimni’s definition of classical Marxism as “a tradition which sees social classes as protagonists of the process of social transformation. It also refers to original theoretical statements of historical materialism. Classical Marxists referred to the *national question* as the totality of political, cultural, ideological, economic and legal relations within and between national communities” (Nimni, p16, emphasis in the original). For Kemp on Marxism, see pp3-4; on Marxism-Leninism, pp4-5 and on Stalinism, pp5-6.

<sup>588</sup> As Kemp puts it: “in popular parlance ‘Communism’ became a code word for the Communist movement organized world-wide” (p5).

<sup>589</sup> One of the best and most concise guides to Marxism as a political ideology can be found in Brian R. Nelson, *Western Political Thought*, Second Edition, Prentice Hall, Eaglewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1996, pp326-358. For a wide-ranging and lucid analysis of Marx’s philosophy, see Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1968. See also Szporluk, pp4-5 and Giddens, *op. cit.*, pp1-64.

<sup>590</sup> Kemp, p6. Cf. Szporluk, p204.

<sup>591</sup> Kemp, p5.

the ideology of perfection and omniscience; it meant the denial of the possibility of error or political neutrality””.<sup>592</sup>

These practices were adapted to suit local conditions in individual Central European states, with shifts of emphasis accompanying political turbulence.<sup>593</sup> Control of representations (and of intellectual output in general) was a constant, however.

Having surveyed the engagement between classical Marxism and Marxist-Leninism with nationalism, I will argue that, far from being a mere tactic, this is a concomitant of Communism (a political ideology confronted with the practicalities of rule) attempting to establish itself as a principle of classification with a distinctive identity component (and interpretation of history).<sup>594</sup>

### 3.5 Marxism and Nationalism

#### 3.5.1 Classical Marxism

In *Communism and Nationalism*,<sup>595</sup> Roman Szporluk contrasts Marx's thought on the nation with that of Friedrich List who concentrated on its economic dimension, particularly industrialisation. Whilst Marx believed that industrial progress intensified and sharpened the antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, List preached class cooperation and solidarity in building a nation's power; whereas for Marx, the Industrial Revolution and the rule of the bourgeoisie that followed in its wake promoted the unification of the world, obliterating national differences, List claimed that the Industrial Revolution increased national differences, exacerbating conflicts between nations. Marx saw the necessity of workers uniting across nations

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<sup>592</sup> Kemp, p5. The quotation is from George Schöpflin (ed.), *The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*, London, Muller, Blond and White, 1986, p132.

<sup>593</sup> Kemp identifies a cyclical pattern of Communism's action and reaction vis-à-vis nationalism (pp83-4), which corresponds to phases of greater and lesser leniency in implementing the practices.

<sup>594</sup> Therefore in Chapter Three onwards, my focus shall be on Communism with a capital 'c' with a case study of Romania. The concept of history comprises two elements, namely the teleological interpretation embodied by historical materialism (see Introduction) and the 'colonization' of the national past (see the section on Daco-Romanian continuity, pp354-376).

<sup>595</sup> For bibliographical details, see footnote 65, p23. For a critical response to Szporluk, see Gellner's *Nationalism and Marxism*, in *Encounters*, pp1-19.

against the bourgeoisie, while List called for the unification of all segments of a nation against other nations. Both Marx and List criticized the political theories and institutions of the West, but where Marx argued that political liberty was illusory, envisaging the task in hand as that of abolishing politics altogether by carrying out a social revolution, which would free man as a human being,<sup>596</sup> List felt that the real basis for a political community was that of the nation, which he defined by cultural criteria and to which he wanted to adjust political boundaries. List focused on the rules that regulated the relations among nations, especially the rules of free trade. In much the same way that Marx perceived political liberty as an ideological cover for class oppression, List considered free trade a cover-up for unequal relations among nations.<sup>597</sup>

In a departure from received wisdom, Szporluk reassesses the relationship between Marxism, capitalism and nationalism: “Conventionally, Marxism is seen as a challenge to classical political economy, which in turn is viewed as the ideology that legitimates the capitalist system. Marxism thus appears as a critique of capitalism from “within”, a critique speaking on behalf of the society’s underdog – the proletariat. What this approach overlooks is that historically Marxism was more than a critique of capitalist relations of production within one country. It was also a critique of nationality (and religion) and a program for the liberation of people from all “intermediate” identities that obstructed an individual’s metamorphosis into a “world-historical personality”. Marxism postulated the formation of the proletariat as a force that transcended national identities and that operated on a supranational scale. Because of this, from its earliest beginnings, Marxism viewed nationalism as a rival and an enemy”.<sup>598</sup>

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<sup>596</sup> Szporluk returns to this on p54, where he writes: “It is a central point of the Marxist theory of history and society that all politics, including democratic politics, presupposes coercion and domination. Real freedom would transform the *citizen* – that is, the member of a political community – into a human being”. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>597</sup> Szporluk, pp4-5. A more detailed exploration of List’s important contribution to nationalist thought is not directly relevant to our immediate concerns. On pp96-151, Szporluk covers the ground admirably. List’s influence on Hungary and Romania is dealt with on pp160-1. Also on List, see Hobsbawm, pp29-31.

<sup>598</sup> Szporluk, p14. On the “world-historical personality”, see also pp51-3. Cf. Nimni, p16: “Nationalism was unanimously defined by classical Marxists as a bourgeois phenomenon alien to Marxism”.

For Szporluk, nationalism was “a third party on the battlefield where Marxism met capitalism”.<sup>599</sup> By encouraging the formation of distinct national communities with their own economic and political interests, which emphatically included the workers, nationalism ran counter to the efforts of the socialists to nurture a solidarity amongst workers, which was oblivious to national frontiers. It held up the national state as an ideal, whilst Marxists condemned states *per se* as instruments of class control, prophesying that they would wither away.<sup>600</sup>

In his evaluation of List from 1845, Marx depicted the aim of the German bourgeoisie according to his adversary as that of establishing the domination of capitalist industry at the precise juncture when the enslavement of the majority as a result of such domination had become a well-known fact. Although the German bourgeoisie had not yet achieved the development of industry, a proletariat not content to put up meekly with its lot already existed. The poverty of political aspirations and outlook of the bourgeoisie in the German-speaking states were manifestations of their backwardness. In principle, a backward country could not make an original contribution to the advancement of economic thought. In other words: “Marx dismissed as reactionary all attempts, such as those of List, to develop an economic theory that reflected the national needs of less developed countries in their transition to capitalism and in their opposition to advanced capitalist countries”.<sup>601</sup>

In Szporluk’s reading, Marx did not admit the possibility of a national road to capitalism and had nothing to say on socialism in one country<sup>602</sup> because capitalism and communism were worldwide systems and could be treated only in a supranational setting. Unlike Marx, List viewed the nation as the fundamental unit into which the human race is divided and which passes through a number of stages of evolution. This process did not occur in isolation, but in the course of interaction with other nations. To List’s mind, it was imperative to compare Germany’s level of development with that attained by England and to look upon the former as a

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<sup>599</sup> As above.

<sup>600</sup> Szporluk, p15.

<sup>601</sup> *Op. cit.*, p31. In his account, Szporluk makes use of anachronisms, such as “Germany”, “political economy” and the like, but does so in a manner that does not distort the content of the thought sketched out. I have followed suit for the sake of clarity.

<sup>602</sup> Although first formulated in 1924, it only took off in 1929 and sought to develop a sense of socialist patriotism. See Kemp, pp87-8.

“developing country” suffering economically and politically as a party engaged in “unequal exchange” with the latter.<sup>603</sup>

In Marx’s eyes, capitalism was the real exploiter, not England. For selfish reasons, he continued, the German bourgeoisie had put forward a different interpretation of the problem when competing against their French and English counterparts, that of “nationality”. This amounted to nothing more than a fraud and a disguise for the capitalist’s cynical materialism. As far as Marx was concerned, List’s theory sought to modify the principles of political economy and their application in relations between developed and developing countries for the advantage of the latter. This involved the idea of national interest as something that was distinct from the interest of the individual capitalist or the class as a whole.<sup>604</sup>

Marx saw List’s simultaneous support of free trade within a united Germany and defence of external tariffs as contradictory. The German bourgeois was keen to wring every last drop out of proletarians at home, but did not want to be exploited outside the country. The concept of the nation allowed him to justify such a stance. On the question as to whether the bourgeoisie as a class had common interests, Marx responded as follows: “However much the individual bourgeois fights against the others, as a *class* the bourgeois have a common interest, and this community of interest, which is directed against the proletariat inside the country, is directed against the bourgeois of other nations outside the country. This the bourgeois calls his *nationality*”.<sup>605</sup>

As Szporluk goes on to comment, Marx did not specify how and why it should be possible for some bourgeois to agree on a common interest against other bourgeois and why the basis for union and separation should be nationality: “Obviously, an economic factor was not the only determinant of national unity. Had Marx admitted as much, he would have recognized that nationality could not be wholly reduced to class economic interests”.<sup>606</sup>

Marx gave short shrift to the notion that the proletariat would succumb to nationalistic temptations proffered by the bourgeoisie, declaring instead that the nationality of the

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<sup>603</sup> Szporluk, pp32-3.

<sup>604</sup> Szporluk, p34.

<sup>605</sup> Quoted in Szporluk, p35. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>606</sup> Szporluk, p35.

worker was labour, his government capital, the air he breathed that of the factory and the land belonging to him a few feet below the ground.<sup>607</sup> The proletariat was completely unlike any other class in that it is not recognized as such and is in itself the expression of the dissolution of all classes, nationalities and so on.<sup>608</sup> Marx repeatedly insisted that its mission was to destroy not only class divisions derived from private property, but also nationality.<sup>609</sup> Only the working class was concerned with bringing about the abolition of existing property relations. This meant that an end to national exploitation could not be attained within the framework of capitalist relations of property. In Marx's words: "victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is at the same time, victory over the national and industrial conflicts which today range the peoples of various countries against one another in hostility and enmity. And so the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is at the same time the signal of liberation for all oppressed nations".<sup>610</sup>

The communist revolution would overthrow the world market, removing all national barriers and instituting cooperation of individuals. This would put them in a position to enjoy the production of the whole earth. Such considerations formed the backdrop of Engels' predictions about the future of nations under communism in his *Draft of a Communist Confession of Faith* from July 1847, where he wrote: "The nationalities of the peoples who join together according to the principle of community will be just as much compelled by this union to merge with one another and thereby supersede themselves as the various differences between estates and classes disappear through the superseding of their basis – private property".<sup>611</sup>

Having demonstrated that both Marx and Engels conceived the revolution as strictly international, Szporluk reminds us of Marx's understanding of history: "For him, the real unit of history, and therefore the unit of historical analysis, was the whole of human society, not any of its segments divided by geographic, political, or linguistic criteria. He did not believe in a "revolution in one country" because he recognized no "history in one country". In other words, Marx did not think that national or state

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<sup>607</sup> As above. Cf. also Szporluk's analysis of *The Communist Manifesto*'s more famous: "The working men have no country", on p68.

<sup>608</sup> Szporluk, p43.

<sup>609</sup> *Op. cit.*, p44. Cf. Engels' 1845 article dealt with on the same page.

<sup>610</sup> Quoted in Szporluk, p45.

<sup>611</sup> Szporluk, p52. On the world market and world literature, see also pp64-6.



boundaries imposed a meaningful constraint on the operation of those larger causal factors that gave rise to such events as revolution. He did not think therefore that a state or a nation constituted an entity that could be analyzed within itself'.<sup>612</sup>

Events in 1848 and afterwards as well as the triumph of capitalism in Germany were nothing short of a catastrophe for Marx in Szporluk's opinion.<sup>613</sup> Both he and Engels witnessed the unification of Italy and Germany (which did not take place in accordance with a Marxist scenario) as well as the mushrooming of national movements across Central Europe. To add insult to injury, in countries where the proletariat was thriving in numbers and influence, it did not define itself as the "universal class" Marx had expected, but was split along national lines.<sup>614</sup>

The first major shift in Marx and Engels' original stance on nationalism occurred in 1848-9 when they endorsed the national liberation efforts of the "historic" or "great" nations, such as the Hungarians, Poles and Germans, all of whom wished to establish large national states.<sup>615</sup> Since large states would facilitate proletarian agitation for its class goals, Marx announced that the nationalists' aims were compatible with his strategic assessment of the prospects of the proletarian revolution.<sup>616</sup> However, Marx and Engels approved of the German claims because Germans were "superior" to such "small" peoples as the Czechs and the Danes. They harboured only hostility towards the aspirations of the so-called "non-historic" nationalities of Central Europe, which stood in the way of German or Hungarian demands.<sup>617</sup> Szporluk concludes that their

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<sup>612</sup> *Op. cit.*, p49. See also pp62-3 and 70.

<sup>613</sup> *Szporluk*, p169.

<sup>614</sup> *Op. cit.*, p170.

<sup>615</sup> *Op. cit.*, p171. Cf. *Herod*, pp6-38. In the course of his incisive analysis of the output of Engels in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* (as well as the articles in Marx's name in the *New York Daily Tribune*), he persuasively shows that even small peoples could find favour on occasion. As Szporluk makes clear (albeit discussing Marx's position), local and national developments played an insignificant part in history unless "a nation happened to find itself, during a certain turning point in world history, at the head of the progress of all humanity" (p49). On state size, see also *Nimni*, p21. On historic and non-historic nations, see also *Munck*, pp21-2; *Connor*, p12 and *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Peter Sugar and Ivo John Lederer, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1994 edition (original 1969), pp21-2.

<sup>616</sup> *Szporluk*, p171.

<sup>617</sup> As above. Szporluk provides examples of disparaging commentary on pp171-4 (cf. *Nimni*, pp29-30 and pp26-37 on the theory in general). On the question of Marx's authorship of the pieces in the *New York Daily Tribune* (collectively known as *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany*), Szporluk

endeavours to procure national emancipation “found no place in Marx’s schema of historical progress”.<sup>618</sup>

When the first volume of *Capital* appeared in 1867, Marx implicitly abandoned his position that capitalism would sweep away national boundaries and create a single, global economic and political process. The preface to *Capital* suggested instead that capitalism would affect individual countries as countries. Moreover, Marx no longer saw historical stages as applicable to the history of human society as a whole, but regarded individual nations as the units undergoing development. Szporluk warns against underestimating the significance of this reversal: “If this indeed was the case, Marx unknowingly had adopted the view that nations (countries, peoples) had a history which transcended historical socioeconomic formations – in other words, that they existed above and beyond history understood as the history of *class* struggle”.<sup>619</sup> Ultimately, however “Marx was not prepared to admit that there might be something in the national character, national traditions, or national community that would call for a response not related to the class point of view and that yet might deserve being supported through political means”.<sup>620</sup> Most notably, he failed to acknowledge that

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indicates that: “These statements were written by Engels, but Marx published them as his own, a fact that, along with other evidence, indicates that he thought exactly the way Engels did” (p174). On the authorship of the editorials in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, see *Herod*, pp17-20. On historic and non-historic nations, see also *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, edited by Peter F. Sugar and Ivo John Lederer, University of Washington Press, Seattle and London, 1994 edition (original 1969), pp21-2 and *Herod*.

<sup>618</sup> Szporluk, p174. See also p190.

<sup>619</sup> *Op. cit.*, p177. Szporluk quotes a passage from the preface to substantiate this: “one nation can and should learn from others. And even when a society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement – and it is the ultimate aim of this work, to lay bare the economic laws of motion of modern society – it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs” (also p177). See also Marx’s deliberations on Russia, catalogued by Szporluk on pp177-181. However, Marx “did not waver in his opposition to the infiltration or contamination of the working class by nationalism” (Szporluk, p182, continuing on p183).

<sup>620</sup> Szporluk, p190. Cf. *Connor*, pp15-16, where he examines Engels’ writings on the 1848 revolutions (which “read very much like a morality play” (p15)). The indictments of entire peoples rely on stereotypes “hardly consonant with a class analysis” (p15). According to Connor, classical Marxism would dictate against the existence of class-transcending national traits: “Even more fundamentally would it dictate against group characteristics of an immutable, trans-epochal type since such

even if a future world communist civilisation would have no nations as working entities, the “historic” (or established) nations would linger on in memory and in the legacy of the pre-communist era, while the “nonhistoric” peoples, having lost in their bid to win independence before the dawn of the communist age, would disappear from history altogether, hardly a comforting outlook for socialists belonging to the latter.<sup>621</sup>

The theme of Marxism’s theoretical engagement with nations is elaborated upon further by Ephraim Nimni. In *Marxism and Nationalism*,<sup>622</sup> he wryly comments: “The Marxist fetish of making sense of every significant social phenomenon by subsuming it within the logic of the universal development of the forces of production, was the blueprint for ingenious but ultimately inapplicable theories of the national question. The heterogeneity of the national phenomenon defies monocausal explanations”.<sup>623</sup> To be fair, however, he adds the qualification that this is a symptom of Western thought in general, which has situated reflection on socio-historical patterns within an “ontology of determinacy”, the assumption that ‘to be’ means ‘to be determined’.<sup>624</sup>

In classical Marxism, social classes are the sole and unique agents of social transformation. Consequently: “the diversity of national questions is the expression of the impact of this unique and privileged agency in a plurality of situations. Thus the impossibility of theorising about the national question stems from the assertion

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characteristics, as part of the superstructure, should necessarily reflect only a particular economic stage” (p15). Having quoted some of Engels’ effusions suggesting the opposite, Connor concludes: “The genetic determinism which permeates these and many other passages by Engels would probably appear extreme within any intellectual framework, but its appearance in the works of one of the two founders of a school described as ‘scientific socialism’ and predicated upon a theory of historical dialectical materialism borders on the bizarre” (p16). Szporluk accepts this point, quoting it on p175.

<sup>621</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp190-1.

<sup>622</sup> For bibliographical details, see footnote 378, p91. For a critique of Nimni, see the essay by Michael Löwy and Enzo Traverso, *Der marxistische Ansatz in der nationalen Frage*, in Löwy’s *Internationalismus und Nationalismus* (henceforth *Löwy*), Neuer ISP Verlag, Köln, 1999, pp25-44.

<sup>623</sup> *Nimni*, p3.

<sup>624</sup> As above. The phrase was coined by Castoriadis. On the influence of the modern concept of causality on the social sciences, see p4.

that, ultimately, the national phenomenon has no logic of its own, but its transformations are only the reflection of the laws of motion of political economy".<sup>625</sup> According to Nimni, the most influential European Marxist discussions on nations are characterized by a recurrent thematic unity and a relatively cohesive line of argument despite significant political and intellectual differences. These "Marxist parameters for the analysis of the national question" are the "theory of the universal evolution of the forces of production"; "the conceptualization of the economic identity and the determining role of forces of production" and "the eurocentric bias" in specific examinations of the universal process of change.<sup>626</sup>

The first refers to "an understanding of social transformation as a process which can be grasped in universal laws of historical development. History is understood as a progressive series of transformations through universal and hierarchically defined stages".<sup>627</sup> Local variations and historical zigzags do not undermine the validity of the model as a whole.<sup>628</sup> The inevitable outcome of the stages is a classless society. Classical Marxism regarded the association of its principles of social evolution with those of natural evolution as a sound criterion of scientificity. Marx borrowed from the natural sciences what he considered to be scientific criteria of objectivity with the result that he "was insensitive to the specificity and non-reducibility of the realm of the social".<sup>629</sup>

The second parameter represents a form of economic reductionism because "it declares that all meaningful changes within the social arena take place in the sphere of economic (class) relations".<sup>630</sup> Marx expressed this in terms of his metaphoric distinction between base and superstructure.<sup>631</sup> The superstructure is shaped and determined, after more or less complex mediations, by the activities and processes of change that occur at the level of the base. Since national identities cut across class

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<sup>625</sup> Nimni, pp5-6.

<sup>626</sup> Nimni, p6.

<sup>627</sup> As above.

<sup>628</sup> Cf. Szporluk, p185 on "Oriental despotism".

<sup>629</sup> Nimni, p8.

<sup>630</sup> As above.

<sup>631</sup> On base and superstructure, see also Rigby 1998, pp177-207 and 251-298 and Giddens, *op. cit.*, pp39-44.

divisions and national communities did not always respond to class interests, this theory erected insurmountable obstacles to the analysis of the national question. A further dimension of economic determination, the equation of material existence and the economy via the concept of production, rendered the privileged position of the forces of production unassailable. The Marxist notion of production encapsulates the need to obtain food and shelter to secure the basic requirements of life. As Nimni summarizes: "In this way, material existence (being) and production are logically unified in an indivisible field. If material existence compels production, this compulsion must be located outside the area of voluntary action, otherwise the 'compulsion' fails to compel. The economy emerges as the realm in which Marx's 'dull compulsion of material life' produces the laws of motion of material production independently of human will. Classical Marxism thus justifies the primacy (in terms of existential causality) and the objectivity (in terms of its independence from human will) of the economic realm".<sup>632</sup> This leaves room for a number of permutations, some of which are connected with bitter methodological disputes that haunt the Marxist tradition. Of the latter, the clash between epiphenomenality and class reductionism with their differing attitudes towards the superstructural domain is of greatest relevance in the debate on the nation.<sup>633</sup>

The concept of epiphenomenality describes a situation where every aspect of the superstructural phenomena is a mere reflection of the economic base. The leading schools of the Second International (with the exception of the Austro-Marxists) were its chief exponents.<sup>634</sup> As Nimni elucidates: "In this sense, a correct understanding of the dynamic of this base is a necessary and sufficient condition for a complete explanation of what occurs at the level of the superstructure. Every movement of the

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<sup>632</sup> Nimni, p9.

<sup>633</sup> As above. These terms were originally devised by Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci*, in *Gramsci and Marxist Theory*, edited by Chantal Mouffe, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1979, pp168-204.

<sup>634</sup> The Second International was founded in 1889 (*Szporluk*, p170). On Austro-Marxism, see Tom Bottomore and Patrick Goode's collection of texts, *Austro-Marxism*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1978, particularly the *Introduction* (pp1-44) and Otto Bauer's *What is Austro-Marxism?* (pp45-8). Cf. *Hobsbawm*, p33.

superstructure is accounted for as a reaction to changes taking place at the level of the base; thus economic relations of production are the unique source of causality".<sup>635</sup>

Although remaining within the same conceptual framework, the class reductionist approach (favoured by the Bolsheviks and the Third International)<sup>636</sup> comprises a shift in emphasis: "Social classes are considered the only possible historical subjects so that ideologies and other superstructural phenomena (such as nationalism and the national arena in general) 'belong' to the paradigmatic area of influence of a class position. This does not prevent the superstructural phenomena from having a certain relative autonomy from the economy as a whole. While all types of contradictions are ultimately determined by economic (class) positions, they may not transparently and immediately reflect the positions of those classes. Political and other activities may advance or delay (according to the circumstances) the outcome of the relations between classes (class struggle)".<sup>637</sup>

The final parameter, the eurocentric bias in case studies, is not a separate analytical tier and therefore cannot be divorced from the preceding two. Paradoxically, although the Marxist tradition claims to be a universal theory of social emancipation, it uses an ethnocentric methodology to conceptualize social formations located outside Western culture. Eurocentrism, therefore, involves constructing "a model of development which universalizes empirically observed European categories of development", with more 'advanced' industrial societies holding up a mirror to their less developed counterparts in which the latter gaze upon the image of their own future.<sup>638</sup>

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<sup>635</sup> *Nimni*, p10.

<sup>636</sup> The founding congress of the Third International was held in 1919. It was dissolved in 1943. See *Munck*, p88.

<sup>637</sup> *Nimni*, p10. *Nimni* calls the notion of "determination in the last instance" the most challenging feature of the class reductionist perspective. It argues that the national phenomenon is more than the effects of economic forces: "A more or less complex system of mediating stages defines the influence of the economic base over cultural and political levels, creating a delaying effect, which gives the superstructure a relatively autonomous existence" (pp10-11). National communities are not directly subsumed into class ideologies and may even pre-exist a given class configuration, but the social and behavioural functions must satisfy the conditions of existence of the dominant mode of production and their concomitant ruling classes. Nationalist movements may only act as catalysts for changes that are about to take place, or are taking place at the level of the forces of production (p11). Cf. *Smith 1991*, pp166-7 on the relationship between nations and classes.

<sup>638</sup> *Nimni*, p11.

The importance of these parameters is that they constitute “a coherent basis for the formulation of a theory of the national question which is compatible with the apparently contradictory positions that Marx and Engels held in relation to various movements of national emancipation”.<sup>639</sup>

Two decisive considerations for the founding fathers in setting out their views were their adherence to a universal, but at the same time, historically situated model for national development (the “state-language-nation” model) and the capacity of national communities to evolve from lower to higher stages of development of productive forces (historical versus non-historical nations).<sup>640</sup>

On the subject of the first: “For Marx and Engels, the modern nation was the direct result of a process whereby the capitalist mode of production superseded feudalism, causing concomitant dramatic changes in the process of social organization. The transition to a capitalist economy impelled a number of Western European social formations to evolve into more linguistically cohesive and politically centralised units”.<sup>641</sup> The standardization of Western European languages responded to the need for efficient communication generated by the greater interaction between participants in the new market. This in turn led to the consolidation of “distinct and recognisable linguistic units based on the embryonic absolutist state”.<sup>642</sup> In a nutshell, to qualify as a modern nation, a community must hold a population large enough to allow for an internal division of labour in accordance with the capitalist system of competing classes and “occupy a cohesive and sufficiently large territorial space to provide for the existence of a viable state”.<sup>643</sup> Nimni notes that the French Revolution was Marx and Engels’ source of inspiration here.<sup>644</sup>

Approval or disapproval of particular national movements hinged on their contribution within the overall historical context: “The modern nation is an

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<sup>639</sup> *Op. cit.*, p17. Thus Nimni rejects the findings of „a significant group of scholars and historical analysts” who maintain that lack of coherence and an ad hoc treatment of national movements dictated by fleeting political events was the order of the day. Cf. *Connor*, p11.

<sup>640</sup> *Nimni*, p17.

<sup>641</sup> *Nimni*, p18. Cf. *Munck*, p1.

<sup>642</sup> As above.

<sup>643</sup> As above. On the preference for large units, cf. *Connor*, p12.

<sup>644</sup> *Nimni*, pp18-19. A useful summary of post-Revolution nation-building efforts in France follows on pp19-20.

epiphenomenal result of the development of the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic class, and the former must be evaluated on the merits of the latter. If it represents a higher stage of development of the productive forces in relation to a predetermined process of historical change, if it abolishes the feudal system by building a national state, then the nationalist movement deserves support because it becomes a tool for progressive social change. If, however, the nationalist movement emerges among linguistic or cultural communities incapable of surviving the upheavals of capitalist transformation (because they are too small or they have a weak or non-existent bourgeoisie) then the nationalist movement becomes a regressive force because it is incapable of overcoming the stage of peasant-feudal social organisation".<sup>645</sup> The latter were reviled as allies of the forces of reaction, representatives of peoples without history, doomed to perish culturally and politically in order to make way for the unifying role of the bourgeoisie.<sup>646</sup>

Against this backdrop, it is possible to envisage a chain of events that will destroy the foundation of every form of class society via the emancipation of the proletariat. Nations were for Marx one of the specific manifestations of civil society.<sup>647</sup> The abolition of the capitalist mode of production will bring about the end of civil society as an entity reproducing the conditions of existence of class societies; the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic class of the civil society and the proletariat as the subordinated oppressed class; the state as the instrument through which the bourgeoisie controls civil society and the nation as the framework for the existence of the bourgeois state.

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<sup>645</sup> Nimni, pp22. For the problems inherent in this approach, see pp26-7. Cf. Connor, pp7 and 10 and Kemp, pp26-8.

<sup>646</sup> Nimni, p27. See also pp33-4. Having traced the Hegelian pedigree of these ideas (pp27-9), Nimni concludes: "The presence of important traces of Hegelian historicism in their universal evolutionary theory, and the related understanding of the national state as a historical construct to secure the conditions of existence of the bourgeoisie, make it inconceivable that their discussion of the national question is simply an ad hoc construct" (p34). And: "On the contrary, the systemic view of the process of evolution of humanity through different modes of production and their concomitant forms of social organization must provide the analytical tools to conceptualise the nation within definite historical boundaries. The emergence of every national state is for Marx and Engels indissolubly linked with the universalisation of the capitalist mode of production and the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. The viability or otherwise of every national state is tested against this fundamental theoretical assumption" (p34). Cf. also p42.

<sup>647</sup> On civil society, see pp21-2; *The German Ideology*, p57 and Avineri, *op. cit.*, pp17-27.



The nation is linked with the fate of the capitalist state because both are epiphenomenal expressions of civil society. The demise of the state thus heralds that of the nation.<sup>648</sup>

Such were the constraints, which blinkered classical Marxism, preventing it from gaining a full appreciation of the nature and power of the national ideal.<sup>649</sup>

### 3.5.2 From Marxist-Leninism to National Communism<sup>650</sup>

In *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy*,<sup>651</sup> Walker Connor succinctly points to the main difference between nationalism and Marxism:

“Nationalism is predicated upon the assumption that the most fundamental divisions of humankind are the many vertical cleavages that divide people into ethnonational groups. Marxism, by contrast, rests upon the conviction that the most fundamental human divisions are horizontal class distinctions that cut across national groupings”.<sup>652</sup>

Marx’s predilection for an economic interpretation of history caused him “to slight the importance of psychological, cultural, and historical elements, and, therefore, to underestimate the magnetic pull exerted by the ethnic group. Since the nation was to Marx essentially an economic unit, the question of political legitimacy was reduced to economic ties. This led him to believe that ethnic minorities should and would be content to consider themselves members of the larger nation to which they were

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<sup>648</sup> Nimni, pp24-5. Cf. Löwy, pp13-24 and Connor, pp7-8.

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Nimni, p14. For alternative accounts of the relationship between Marxism and nationalism, see Guibernau, pp13-21; Michael Löwy, *Marxists and the National Question*, in *New Left Review*, No.96 (1976), pp81-100; Breuilly 1993, pp407-414; Gellner, pp93-4, 96, 114-116 and 129-30 (for the “Wrong Address” theory) and Munck on classical Marxism, pp9-28. Nimni’s skilled dissection of the main currents of subsequent Marxist thought, to which the lion’s share of his book is dedicated cannot be dealt with here, but I would nevertheless draw attention to his analysis of Otto Bauer’s sophisticated contribution to the Marxist debate on pp119-184 as well as in *Nimni 2000*. For alternative assessments of Bauer, see Munck, pp39-42; Löwy’s *Die Nation als Schicksalsgemeinschaft* in Löwy, pp87-93; Kedourie, pp111-2; Smith’s *Myths*, pp35-6 and Kemp’s stocktaking of the flawed legacy the founding fathers of Marxism left behind for their successors, Kemp, p32.

<sup>650</sup> On national Communism, see Kemp, pp80-2 and 128.

<sup>651</sup> For bibliographical details, see footnote 379, p91. On Lenin, see also Hobsbawm, pp124-5. For alternative readings of Marxist-Leninism, see Szporluk, pp213-220 and 229-30; Nimni, pp70-90; Kemp, pp45-54; Munck, pp69-87 and Herod, pp100-110.

<sup>652</sup> Connor, p5.

economically wedded. Marx held that workers in a modern industrialized setting were deaf to ethnonational appeals that conflicted with their economic interests. Regardless, then, of dissimilarities in culture and ethnic traditions, identification with a given nation rested simply upon ties to an economic unit”.<sup>653</sup> In short, the chief deficiency of his and Engels’ formidable body of work is that it badly underestimated “the emotional pull and tenacity of national identity”.<sup>654</sup>

Connor discerns three strains of thought on the national question bequeathed by Marx and Engels to their ideological successors. The first, “classical Marxism”, asserted “the primacy of class consciousness and the indispensability of class struggle, and was therefore irreconcilable with nationalism”.<sup>655</sup> The second, “strategic Marxism, revolved about formal support for the right of national self-determination in the abstract, coupled with very selective support for national movements in the realm of action”.<sup>656</sup> Although these were not naturally harmonious, they could be reconciled provided Marxists never forgot that nationalism was a bourgeois and hence ephemeral ideology whose progressiveness and life expectancy dwindled as society progressed from feudalism through capitalism toward socialism. The third, “national Marxism, was reflected in references to national characteristics that transcend epochs, and to the role of nations as the principle instrumentality of historical forces. Though potentially compatible with an internationalistic, non-Marxist interpretation of history, national Marxism was irreconcilable with classical Marxism’s emphasis upon class and class warfare”.<sup>657</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Connor, p8. He condenses what he terms “the classical position of Marx and Engels on nationalism” (p10) into nine propositions, to be found on pp10-11 and 14. He comments on the first seven that they “form a coherent, consistent stance toward nationalism” (p11): “Had they been faithfully reflected throughout all of the writings of Marx and Engels, ambiguity would be limited to whether or not *all* cultural and psychological vestiges of national particularism would be eradicated in the post-capitalist era” (p11, emphasis in the original). 1848, however, upset the theoretical applecart and their new appreciation for the importance of nationalism was expressed in strategic considerations (summarized in the two final propositions on p14).

<sup>654</sup> Connor, p19.

<sup>655</sup> Connor, p19.

<sup>656</sup> Connor, pp19-20.

<sup>657</sup> Connor, p20. Szporluk echoes Connor’s earlier conclusion that these contradictions arose in the wake of 1848, which had forced Marx and Engels to acknowledge that nation and nationalism were more important than they had initially believed. He continues: “The three strains about which Connor

According to Connor, Lenin cultivated the second strain, coming to appreciate the tactical wisdom of ostensible alliances with national forces.<sup>658</sup> The slogan of self-determination thus became his main weapon.<sup>659</sup> From 1914 to his death in 1924, two recurring topics of his treatises, speeches and private correspondence were how to battle against nationalism where necessary and how to manipulate it in the interests of the international movement wherever possible.<sup>660</sup> Self-determination, however, had become popular across the political spectrum and could not function as a specifically Marxist doctrine without further refinement. Consequently, Lenin deemed it necessary to state unequivocally that national self-determination included the right of political secession.<sup>661</sup> Since he was convinced that few small nations would act against their economic self-interest in the longer term, Lenin did not feel that he was trespassing against Marx's insistence on large states.

The reasoning underlying his espousal of secession betrayed his attitude towards nationalism: "Lenin conceived of nationalism in purely negative terms as the response of a people to past oppression and prejudice, whether real or imagined. He was

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speaks form, in a sense, a chronological sequence. Marx and Engels had begun with a wholly negative view of the prospects of nation and nationalism. Then they modified it somewhat in practice. Still later, they came close to recognizing that the phenomenon of nationality contained something that could not be wholly 'decoded' or exposed in class terms. But the founders of Marxism, even at that later date, did not re-examine their general theoretical stand" (*op. cit.*, p192).

<sup>658</sup> Cf. Kemp, pp49-50.

<sup>659</sup> Connor, p30. On the origin of self-determination, Connor quips: "It is indeed somewhat ironic that this most famous credo of nationalism should make its first appearance in a public document which was drafted by history's most famous internationalist" (p11). The reference is to Marx's *Proclamation on the Polish Question*, endorsed by the First International in 1865. He charts the later useages of the principle on pp30-1. On Lenin's idiosyncratic understanding of self-determination, see also Kemp, pp50-1.

<sup>660</sup> Connor, p31. On pp31-4, Connor surveys Lenin's merging of the colonial and national questions in *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which he regards as one of Lenin's major contributions to Marxist thought. Once again, due to the European focus of the present undertaking, its influence in the developing world is not dealt with here.

<sup>661</sup> Connor, p33. Connor adds that he seems to have agreed with Stalin's more comprehensive definition from 1913, which includes, but is not limited to secession and reads as follows: "The right of self-determination means that a nation can arrange its life according to its own will. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal" (quoted on p33).

therefore convinced that the only way to combat nationalism was by use of the carrot, not the stick. And hence the dialectic: by conceding all, or rather, by seeming to concede all to nationalism, one in fact was promoting internationalism. With specific regard to self-determination, this meant that the best way to avoid or to dissipate a grass-roots demand for independence was to proffer that independence".<sup>662</sup>

In practice, Lenin drew a distinction between the abstract right of self-determination, which was enjoyed by all nations, and the right to exercise it, which was not. The decision to give or withhold support in a given case was left to the discretion of the Communist party, whose members were to be free of the taint of nationalism.<sup>663</sup> His vision of party organization (later euphemistically labelled as "democratic centralism"), striving "to proceed from the top downward" and upholding "an extension of the rights and powers of the centre in relation to the parts" made him confident that all decisions concerning self-determination would be guided by Marxist strategy rather than by ethnicity.<sup>664</sup> All forms of federalism and autonomy were vehemently opposed as inappropriate to the party and were explicitly rejected in part as insurance against ethnic poles of power coming into being within the apparatus. As far as assimilation was concerned, Lenin firmly believed that it was inevitable. The bitterness and mistrust felt by the minorities were due to a superior-inferior relationship long practiced by the Russians. For the purposes of removing this obstacle in the path of assimilation, a period of national equality would be ushered in

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<sup>662</sup> Connor, p34. On the historical background to the interaction between nationalism and Marxism in Russia, see *Szporluk*, pp206-12; *Kemp*, pp45-54 and 57-93 (from 1917 to the end of World War Two) and *Connor*, pp45-61 (for his sketch of the Soviet model and the strategic considerations underpinning the enshrinement of the principle of self-determination in the constitution). Cf. *Kemp*, pp48 and 50 where he concludes that Lenin understood nationalism as largely a psychological phenomenon with no dynamic of its own: "One could placate national emotions by avoiding oppression and chauvinism: get rid of exploitation and there would be no fertile soil in which nationalist sentiment could grow. Recognition of the equality of nations, not national differences, had to be stressed, for the unity of proletarian solidarity and comradely unity in the workers' class struggle called for the fullest equality of nations with a view to removing every trace of national distrust, estrangement, suspicion and enmity. He believed that the recognition of the equality of nations and languages would assuage the political drive for self-determination. It is worth noting that he believed that this would eliminate national friction and national suspicion, but not necessarily nations" (p48).

<sup>663</sup> Connor, p35.

<sup>664</sup> Connor, pp35-6.

to alleviate tensions. Employing force could only have the unintended effect of strengthening nationalism, hence a frontal assault upon it was not on the agenda and the voluntary nature of assimilation continually stressed. To Lenin it was not the language but the message that counted.<sup>665</sup> Granting the use of local languages whilst maintaining control was to surrender little, especially as the higher echelons of the party would be responsible for designing the general content of the educational curricula and the media. Broadcasting, writing and lecturing in the national mother tongue would increase receptiveness to the party line (including the ultimate goal of assimilation).<sup>666</sup>

In 1925, Stalin officially dubbed this “national in form, socialist in content”:

“Proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and methods of expression among the various peoples that have been drawn into the work of socialist construction, depending on differences of language, customs, and so forth. Proletarian in content and national in form – such is the universal culture toward which socialism is marching. Proletarian culture does not cancel national culture, but lends it content. National culture, on the other hand, does not cancel proletarian culture, but lends it form”.<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>665</sup> Connor captures the essence of Lenin’s programme thus: “To Lenin, language and other overt manifestations of national uniqueness were construed, on balance, as conveyors of messages emanating from the party. In and by themselves they were merely forms. It was the party, acting through the state, which would give them content” (*op. cit.*, p202).

<sup>666</sup> Connor, pp37-8. The policy of promoting pluralism subsequently became known as “the flourishing of the nations” (Connor, p201). Leninists tended to avoid the term “assimilation”, preferring “the rapprochement” or “coming together” of nations (see pp201-2). Lenin was extremely vague on the timeframe during which assimilation would be achieved (Connor, pp388-392 and 458). On balance: “Lenin’s implicit condemnation of all non-coercive efforts to bring about assimilation directly (non-dialectically) was logically at odds with his view of nationalism as a psychological phenomenon. The latter had accounted for his dialectical scheme for achieving assimilation via a period of the flourishing of nations. This scheme was based on a recognition that assimilation would require a lengthy period of constraint rather than activism on the part of the authorities. The incompatibility between this dialectical strategy and support for “non-coercive”, direct assimilation would seem to be irreconcilable” (p482).

<sup>667</sup> During his speech at the University of Peoples of the East on 18<sup>th</sup> May, quoted in Connor, p240. Connor denotes *The Communist Manifesto* as the immediate source of inspiration for this phrase, whereas Kemp attributes the role to Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (Connor, p240 and Kemp, p233 respectively). Cf. also Connor, pp37 and 202 and Kemp, p38.

Where Lenin and his successors went wrong in Connor's book was in failing to appreciate that "forms have a content of their own".<sup>668</sup> For example: "Demarcating the borders of the administrative unit gives geographic precision to the more shadowy notion of the ethnic motherland. Constitutionally declaring the unit to be 'sovereign' or 'autonomous' legitimizes the idea of self-rule. Giving the unit an ethnic designation conveys the idea that the unit's proper *raison d'être* is the safeguarding and promotion of the national interests of the people so designated. Adorning the unit with its own government as well as other appurtenances of political individuality (seals, flags, and the like) conditions the people to think in terms of their particular unit rather than in terms of the entire state".<sup>669</sup>

Thus neither classical Marxism, nor Marxist-Leninism were able to engage with nationalism in a way that took it seriously. Stalin's record was hardly more impressive.<sup>670</sup>

Although Kemp claims that "communism and nationalism may not be antithetical" in theory, he admits that in practice the "basic contradiction" between them was not

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<sup>668</sup> Connor, p495. He repeats this on p511: "National forms (particularly language and homeland) have a national content in and by themselves. Far from exerting a deadening effect upon nationalism, encouraging national forms reinforces that phenomenon". See also, p513 ("the overt symbols of group uniqueness perpetuate and reinforce that self-identification with a particular group, its past and future, which is nationalism") and 583.

<sup>669</sup> Connor, p497 (see also Kemp on this argument, pp72-4). Although Connor is talking about the Soviet Republics, the point applies even more forcefully when applied to the People's Democracies, which were already independent nations at the time of the Communist takeovers and, as Kemp states, had "much richer national histories than most of the republics of the Soviet Union" (p93). Connor enlarges upon the forms breeding content issue on p501: "When the form is an autonomous, ethnically defined unit, expectations do not remain confined to specifically enumerated powers. Simply dwelling within one's autonomous ethnic unit – no matter how circumscribed the authorities declare the unit's powers to be – instills a sense of possession of fundamental proprietary rights. Form becomes the father of content". The affinity with Billig's arguments should be clear.

<sup>670</sup> Nimni is perhaps the most charitable of the authors reviewed on the subject of Stalin. He writes: "The evolutionary and hierarchical perception of national development which permeated the works of Lenin also had its impact on Stalin's understanding of the national phenomenon" (p93). On Stalin and the national question, see Nimni, pp90-5; Szporluk, pp216-7, 221-2 and 230-2; Kemp, pp54-6, 74-93; Connor, pp45-61; Herod, pp109-112 and Munck, pp76-85.

bridged.<sup>671</sup> My approach is somewhat different, as will become apparent. In my view, like nationalism, Communism employs a principle of classification based on an irreducible dichotomy, in this instance that which exists between exploiters and exploited, falling into standard (stereotypical) categories invested with stock attributes, elasticity interpreted to allow new groups to be subsumed under them should the political exigencies of a given moment require it:

worker (honest, contributing to the material well-being of the collectivity)	capitalist/bourgeois (parasitical, dishonest, selfishly accumulating at the expense of the collectivity)
working peasant	Kulak
progressive intellectual (acknowledging and lauding the inherent superiority of the Communist system)	reactionary intellectual (rejecting and undermining the Communist system)
communist	Imperialist
internationalist	Chauvinist

The dichotomy has a moral dimension, synonymous with the absolute distinctions between good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and injustice, progress and regression and reason and superstition. There is no middle ground here, no room for shades of grey in this reductivist scheme, which is particularly susceptible to contradiction in the cut and thrust of everyday reality. Communism is a political identity legitimated by the moral superiority it professes.<sup>672</sup> Proclaiming itself as the only system guaranteeing an equitable distribution of wealth and resources, it explicitly undertakes to provide the maximum benefit for the maximum number of citizens whilst vigorously asserting a monopoly on truth and wisdom, dismissing all competing worldviews as false consciousness.<sup>673</sup>

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<sup>671</sup> Kemp, p206. Cf. also, pp22, 82-5, 128 and 173.

<sup>672</sup> Arguments concerning historical inevitability serve the purpose of proving that submitting to Communist rule is no more than bowing to the dictates of rationality.

<sup>673</sup> Cf. Szporluk, p185; Gellner, *Islam and Marxism: some comparisons* (henceforth *Islam*) in *International Affairs*, 67, No. 1 (1991), p1 and Munck, p2. On false consciousness, see Martin Seliger, *The Marxist Conception of Ideology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, pp19-22, 28-36, 69-77, 81-2 and 167-8.

Once in power, Communism seeks to create society in its own image with its grandiose industrialisation and collectivisation projects, which it portrays as essential to attaining the aim of eliminating the disparities of wealth, rank and privilege that give rise to inequalities.<sup>674</sup> By stripping former oppressors of their property, assets, titles, influence and reputations, it empties its own categories of all meaning.<sup>675</sup> It cannot make sense to rail against exploitative landowners where land is collectivised under state supervision. In implementing its egalitarian vision, Communism abolishes the need for itself. Constant threats (conspiracies, rumours of backsliding into the iniquitous habits of the past on the inside and Imperialist encroachments on the outside) are manufactured to justify the Party's continued right to rule. Likewise, in a rhetoric of perpetual postponement, ever more ambitious targets for output are set to harness energy, concentrating minds on a glorious common project of benefit to all. The fact that Communism preaches egalitarianism whilst practicing ruthless hierarchy (sweeping aside one set of elites to replace them with its own, a chosen few ostensibly elevated by virtue of merit, though this was manifestly not the case) engenders cognitive dissonance.<sup>676</sup>

Particularly in its Stalinist phase, Communism exudes a pathological loathing of pluralism, fostering a relationship of complete dependency between itself and its subjects, whereby the state accumulates the surplus product to allocate amongst

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<sup>674</sup> Cf. *Kemp*, pp88-9.

<sup>675</sup> Whereas Communism indubitably restructures society to swell the ranks of the industrial proletariat and the landless peasants, it eradicates the negative figures of hatred. Once settled in power, it is compelled to invent new villains who can only be drawn from within albeit fallen under the spell and perhaps in the pay of malevolent foreign agents. The ritualistic purges of counter-revolutionary and dissident elements not only compensate for the lack of traditional internal enemies, but also entail the added advantage of institutionalising chronic insecurity, reminding all office-holders that they remain in place by the grace of the Party. Ultimately the ceaseless parade of corrupted delinquents tests faith in the efficacy of the Communist undertaking beyond endurance as it hints at some imperfection reducing the resistance to temptation of those once held up as paragons.

<sup>676</sup> Nationalism does not suffer from this drawback because it does not approve of some social categories and vilify others, being „politically blind” to internal disparities. As Benedict Anderson explains, the nation „is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (*Imagined*, p7, emphasis in the original).



citizens,<sup>677</sup> assuming the role of sole benefactor, taking care of every aspect of their lives, lulling them into passivity. Self-reliance and taking responsibility for one's own welfare are not cast as virtues. The other side of the paternalistic state coin, however, is that independent thought (such as that manifested by adoption of a divergent way of life) is frowned upon and the public and private spheres merge<sup>678</sup> (indeed the Party stifled initiative by annexing all other forms of collective organisation from trade unions to folk dance ensembles and by placing all economic activity under state supervision – henceforward titles such as “outstanding worker” would be the ultimate reward rather than profit).<sup>679</sup> Every utterance and deed becomes suffused with political meaning to the extent that the most trivial deviations in behaviour are automatically suspect.

Even language does not emerge unscathed from this colonisation of every aspect of human existence with forms of address being modified to remove social distance between individuals, comrade being the honorific appropriate to all, from Party Secretary to humble tractor driver. Where old words continued to be used their meanings shifted. Perhaps the most striking example of this phenomenon is the concept of “democracy”, which came to signify Party rule, subtly reinforcing the doctrine that genuine democracy can only be achieved under Communist leadership. Moreover seemingly innocuous changes in terminology often heralded radical policy shifts so that language shaped social reality rather than vice versa.<sup>680</sup>

Communist identity lacks the material component of its national counterpart.

Communists may be nobler in spirit or more enlightened than their fellow men, but loyalty to the Party and cause springs from conscious choice, an act of volition rather than an ineluctable, in-born difference. Within Communist society, individuals are defined according to the work they perform, the productive function they fulfil and the contribution they make to society is both the measure of their solidarity and the source of self-esteem.

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<sup>677</sup> Verdery, *National Ideology*, p75. She dubs the concentration of resources appropriation of “allocative power”. For the stifling of private initiative this entailed, see Kolar, p339.

<sup>678</sup> Cf. Kemp, p5.

<sup>679</sup> Cf. Breuilly 1993, pp386-7.

<sup>680</sup> This tendency was particularly apparent in the case of designations applied to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania.

A further problem inherent to establishing and maintaining a Communist identity is that Communism has no natural metaphors to draw on. Appeals to materialism and the pathos of brotherhood (in the sense of a bond engendered through espousal and pursuit of a common cause), heroic struggle and liberation from tyranny coexist with vitriolic condemnation of the sworn enemies of Communism, but these concepts have no point of reference outside the social (manmade, artificial) world. Building, the most frequently used metaphor, is replete with positive, optimistic connotations, symbolising new beginnings, the imposition of order on chaos, re-emergence from the devastation and ruin of war, clearing away the debris of the past, investing in the future and of economic growth. Although the healthy body could be deployed as a symbol to revile the enemies of the people who were likened to virulent bacteria, venomous snakes and other infecting or contaminating agents, the cohesive, unifying force itself could not be explained in terms of kinship.

Similarly, in efforts to situate itself throughout past time, Communism only had a meagre seam to exploit compared to nationalism's mother lode, more or less restricted to labelling all revolts, uprisings and protest riots as its precursors.<sup>681</sup>

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<sup>681</sup> Cf. *Smith 1991*, p161. The very fact, however, that Marxism possesses its own interpretation of history (a feature it shares with nationalism) corroborates my hypothesis that it functions as a principle of classification. On the use of history by post-war Communist parties, see *Kemp*, pp95-7, 112-3 and 125-6. Further valuable arguments on the weaknesses of Communism compared to nationalism complementing my own include Guibernau's on the nature of nationalism: "while nationalism provides a series of goals – the creation of a state, the reconstruction of the nation, the development and encouragement of the national culture and interests – it does not indicate the direction to be taken or the methods which should be adopted to achieve them. In my view, nationalism does not supply an account of the content and means of action of a party, except during a period of extreme repression and complete opposition to the state. Nationalism does not determine what politics its adherents should support. It is insufficient to know where one wants to go, one needs also to find out and decide how to get there" (*Guibernau*, pp63-4). Communism, I would add, lacks this flexibility and is limited in appeal to the far left of the political spectrum, or, in Szporluk's words: "Nationalism stubbornly refuses to be pigeonholed in the capitalism-or-communism compartment" (p234; cf. also *Kedourie*, pp84-6 on why it is mistaken to ask whether nationalism is politics of the right or left). Guibernau also touches upon the "artificiality" of Communism in a world of nations: "The emotional charge that individuals invest in their land, language, symbols and beliefs while building up their identity, facilitates the spread of nationalism. Thus while other forms of ideology such as Marxism or liberalism require the indoctrination of their followers, nationalism emanates from this basic emotional attachment to one's land and culture" (*Guibernau*, p76). Benedict Anderson (*Imagined*, pp9-12 and cf. p144) and Smith

Communism's relationship to nationalism was, as a general rule, fraught.<sup>682</sup> It was not averse to encouraging nationalist movements wherever expedient in terms of gaining an initial foothold or calling for national minority rights where this gave it greater leverage. In Central Europe, the nation state was retained as an organisational structure: symbolically the hammer and sickle were superimposed on national flags.<sup>683</sup> The precise nature of the accommodation to nationalism, how much ground was given, the way in which stirrings of love of country could be channelled to enhance Party standing and prestige reflected the mode of control and local circumstances. Communism was never able to ignore its rival principle of classification entirely: the genie had definitively been let out of the bottle.<sup>684</sup>

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(*Smith 1991*, pp160-1) both examine mortality and why Marxism, unlike nationalism, is unable to assuage the pain of personal oblivion. Gellner in *Islam* talks about the absence of a profane sphere in the secular Marxist faith (pp3-4). Finally, there is Smith's magisterial account of the weaknesses of class as a source of identity (*Smith 1991*, pp4-6).

<sup>682</sup> Cf. *Connor*, p584.

<sup>683</sup> This is as the symbolic equivalent of the phenomenon Kemp describes as follows: "Communist regimes tried to promote the idea of socialist patriotism, but this did not always win the support of the national community at which it was directed, because it was synthetic and did not represent the underlying political culture. In most cases it was perceived by the people as something imposed, something foreign, whereas national consciousness is something that is (or has become) innate" (*op. cit.*, p7).

<sup>684</sup> Szporluk clearly outlines the nature of the relationship: "Indeed, when communism has defeated rival doctrines, it has owed its victory to the adoption of at least some of the principles of nationalism and to the fact that it has become national, indeed nationalist, itself" (*op. cit.*, p5). Later, he also writes: "the nationalization of communism is a fact" (*Op. cit.*, p234). Although, properly speaking in his view, Lenin had been the first national Communist, he dates the formal birth of national Communism to Tito's defiance of Stalin in 1948 (p232). To state the case slightly differently, Communist regimes came to power in a world of nations. Hobsbawm admitted as much when he wrote: "It is almost impossible for political consciousness not to be in some way or another nationally defined. The proletariat, like the bourgeoisie, existed only conceptually as an international fact. In reality it existed as an aggregate of groups defined by their national state or ethnic/linguistic difference: British, French or, in multi-national states, German, Hungarian, or Slav. And, in so far as "state" and "nation" were supposed to coincide in the ideology of those who established institutions and dominated civil society, politics in terms of the state implied politics in terms of the nation" (quoted in *Szporluk*, p182). Cf. Geoff Eley's appraisal, entirely in line with our general argument: "The nation comes to represent an ideological and institutional structure of immense power, which begins to set limits on the possible forms of political action and belief. Almost imperceptibly, nationalism loses its character as a sectional creed articulating the aspirations of liberal and other tendencies within the bourgeoisie, and passes into

### 3.5.3 The Communist Accommodation to Nationalism: An Illustration<sup>685</sup>

Hungary yields an instructive example of one possible truce with nationalism, throwing the dilemmas of the relationship between Communism and nationalism as explored above into high relief. József Révai, one of the leading Marxist ideologists in the Rákosi era favoured the strategic deployment of national symbols in the Communist's bid for power: "We must stress the national character of our Party. Symbols are also important and it is also true that it is not essential for the Internationale to be sung without fail at every village assembly, but it is essential that both versions of the national anthem should be learned. It is important for us to go to the smallholders with flags in the national colours" and "Our patriotism takes as its starting point the view that Democracy cannot be built from nothing, but must be built on the progressive and honest elements of the Hungarian past. Hungarian Democracy can only be built by the Hungarian people and whoever repudiates or denies the past repudiates the Hungarian people who represent the sole foundation of Hungarian Democracy. Hungarian Democracy cannot date the existence of the nation back to the day it came into being".<sup>686</sup> Compare this with Rákosi's impassioned declaration of loyalty to the Soviet Union once the battle had been won: "Each people may contribute its own path and its own special features to the ways and means of the building of Socialism and the form this building assumes, but there is no such thing as a separate "national" path to be followed in any matter of substance or on any of the crucial issues".<sup>687</sup> On occasion, Rákosi felt compelled to argue the case against

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the common heritage of a political culture – becoming, as Tom Nairn puts it, 'a name for the general condition of the modern body politic, more like the climate of political and social thought than just another doctrine'" (quoted in *Szporluk*, p186).

<sup>685</sup> For an in-depth portrait of the phenomenon in Czechoslovakia, see *Kemp*, pp94-126. On the Communist takeover in Hungary, see *Romsics 2000*, pp271-294; on the Rákosi dictatorship, *idem*, pp335-395 and on the Kádár era, pp399-534.

<sup>686</sup> József Révai 1947, quoted in *A Kígyó Bőre, Ideológia és Politika*, by Éva Ständeisky, in *A Fordulat Évei*, p158. On the Communist efforts to appropriate Kossuth as a proto-Communist, see András Gerő's illuminating monograph on the anniversary celebrations of the 1848 Revolution in *Az államosított forradalom*, Új Mandátum Kiadó, Budapest, 1998 and likewise on György Dózsa, *Kemp*, p118.

<sup>687</sup> Rákosi, *Visszaemlékezések*, Vol. 2, p704.

nationalism even more strongly: "We must fight unceasingly against every manifestation of nationalism. We must not be allowed to forget that the Horthy regime<sup>688</sup> stubbornly attempted to implant every variety of chauvinism, anti-Semitism and racial arrogance into the working class over a period of 25 years, and these efforts were not without success. Prior to that, entire generations were raised in the spirit of Hungarian "racial superiority". The poison of nationalism has penetrated into the working people".<sup>689</sup>

In the wake of the 1956 Revolution Rákosi's successor Kádár was confronted with the dual challenge of re-establishing the Party's primacy (controlling definitions and representations), whilst visibly distancing himself both from Rákosi (destalinization, openly eschewing the personality cult by prohibiting images of himself from being displayed in public, donning a velvet glove to conceal the iron fist by moving from a tight symbolic-ideological to a remunerative mode of control)<sup>690</sup> and from Imre Nagy (discrediting the Revolution and denouncing its ringleaders). Characteristically this entailed a renegotiation of the pact with national sentiment, drawing a distinction between bourgeois nationalism and Socialist patriotism. Rather than clamping down on the emotions that had inflicted so much damage on the previous regime, Kádár's ideologists provided them with a legitimate outlet, redirecting them for the greater good of the Party: "Nationalism is the ideology of the bourgeois, expressing the interests of the bourgeoisie. [...] The bourgeoisie attempts to prevent the development of proletarian class warfare and obstruct collaboration amongst the workers of different nations in the fight against capitalism by employing nationalist slogans and fanning the flames of animosity between nations. In countries where capitalism has already been overthrown, the bourgeoisie, stripped of its power, endeavours to win the support of the masses in its assault against Socialism by using nationalism and it is with nationalism that it tries to obstruct the development of national unity and the establishment of a new, Socialist nation headed by the working class".<sup>691</sup>

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<sup>688</sup> Miklós Horthy (1868-1957) was elected Regent of Hungary on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1921, a position he held until 16<sup>th</sup> October 1944 when, under intense German pressure, he resigned and appointed Ferenc Szálasi (leader of the fascist Arrow Cross Movement) Prime Minister (*Kontler*, p385).

<sup>689</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p808.

<sup>690</sup> Verdery, *National Ideology*, pp85-86.

<sup>691</sup> *A Burzsoá Nacionalizmusról és a Szocialista Hazafiságról*, MSZMP Central Committee's Agitation and Propaganda Department, published in *Társadalmi Szemle* 1959, year 14, Vol. 8-9, pp11-39.

Genuine, legitimate feelings of pride are thus manipulated in an underhand effort to conceal the true agenda: "National sentiment, love of one's country is not the same as nationalism: nationalism is the corrupter of true national sentiment. Nationalism attempts to exploit the national sentiments of the masses to deceive the people".<sup>692</sup> Nationalism's obfuscating rhetoric lapses into mysticism with its pontifications on "blood and spirit, emotion and consciousness, tradition and vocation, world view and civilisation, faith and action".<sup>693</sup> Socialist patriotism, by contrast, is the epitome of common sense: "The Socialist patriotism of the liberated working class does not emanate from some sort of mystical "national soul". Socialist patriotism is *genuine love of the people and the land of birth, the battle for the social emancipation of the working class and all working people and for an end to be put to every variety of oppression, for the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the building of Socialism and the complete victory of Communism*. The homeland becomes the homeland of the working people; the bourgeois nation is replaced by the Socialist nation. Patriotism is filled with new content: active support for the building of Socialism. The basic tenet of Socialist patriotism is that, in our day and age, *the path towards lasting national advance is that of Socialism*. For this very reason, Socialist patriotism acts as the militant protector of power vested in the people and of the Socialist organisation of production. The patriotic forces that support Socialism proclaim and effectuate solidarity and the fight against the bourgeois counter-revolution within the country and in the international sphere, with solidarity between the forces of Socialism and peace and the fight against imperialism."<sup>694</sup> Socialist patriotism was entirely compatible with proletarian internationalism and unity within the Socialist camp: "Internationalism of the workers is based on the fact that, in the fight against capitalism, the proletariats of all countries share common

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Reproduced in full in *Helyünk Európában, Nézetek és Konceptiók a 20. Századi Magyarországon*, Vol. 2, Magvető, Budapest 1986, edited by Éva Ring, p400, hereinafter *Helyünk*. On this text, see also George Barany's *Hungary: From Aristocratic to Proletarian Nationalism*, in Sugar and Lederer, *op. cit.*, pp259-309, pp306-7. For Imre Nagy's deliberations, which these statements contest, see *Kemp*, pp140-2.

<sup>692</sup> *Helyünk*, p224.

<sup>693</sup> *Op. cit.*, p230.

<sup>694</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp239-240, emphasis in the original. For an excellent overview of the dilemmas and pitfalls of socialist patriotism, see *Kemp*, pp123-6.

interests and afford each other mutual support in the fight to emancipate the workers. In the international fight against imperialism, the construction activities performed by the workers of the Socialist camp, the anti-capitalist and pro-democracy struggle of the working classes of the capitalist countries and the anti-imperialist struggle for liberation fought by the peoples of colonised and dependent countries coincide and intertwine".<sup>695</sup> Imperialism's chief concern was to shatter this unity by spreading the calumny that its avowed foundation of "complete equality", territorial inviolability and sovereignty of the individual Socialist countries was nothing but a sham.<sup>696</sup> In order to refute these allegations, the Soviet Union's dominance had to be put in its proper perspective, as the status due to a *primus inter pares* rather than the tribute exacted by an oppressive overlord (and the boundless adulation of the Rákosi era toned down to lend the arguments greater "objectivity"): "In the family of Socialist nations, *the Soviet Union is the primary and strongest Socialist power*, which has accumulated the greatest amount of experience in the building of Socialism and which has progressed furthest along the path leading to Communism, has provided and continues to provide the greatest assistance to the workers of the other Socialist and of the capitalist countries in the fight for peace and Socialism. The Soviet Union is the centre of the Socialist camp, the example which it sets is of inestimable value to the countries building Socialism".<sup>697</sup> "Protecting and defending the unity of the Socialist camp and cultivating good relations with the Soviet Union are the primary requirements of Socialist patriotism".<sup>698</sup> Such an unequivocal statement was designed to dispel any lingering doubts concerning Hungary's loyalties.

Having so firmly proclaimed Hungary's unswerving commitment to Socialism and taken the sting out of patriotism, Kádár was able to relax the Party's authoritarian grip slightly and contain dangerous criticism through application of the "three Ts": *tűrés* (tolerance), *támogatás* (support for the so-called *szalonellenzék* or state-approved opposition) and *tiltás* (prohibiting), the latter reserved for those who asked more fundamental questions about the viability and desirability of the system. At the same

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<sup>695</sup> *Op. cit.*, p241.

<sup>696</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp241-242.

<sup>697</sup> *Op. cit.*, p242, emphasis in the original.

<sup>698</sup> *Op. cit.*, p242.

time he held out the prospect of greater prosperity for all in exchange for political conformity.<sup>699</sup>

The pragmatic Hungarian solution was but one amongst many. In Ceaușescu's Romania, a very different compromise with nationalism was arrived at.

## **Section Four: Representations**

### **4.1 The Nature and Functions of Representations**

I define representations as motivated statements about or depictions of a social reality (or specific aspects thereof), which are simultaneously constitutive of it, in relation to a presupposed collectivity (audience or target group, usually the nation<sup>700</sup>), seeking to influence thought (and often provoke debate), either with a view to maintaining existing classifications or to subvert or overthrow them. In many respects, representations merit the designation of the cultural embodiment of the dominant principle of classification.<sup>701</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> Cf. Kemp, p174: „Since the national Communist parties had been stripped of the mantle of protector of the nation, they had to seek legitimacy elsewhere. Increasingly they sought to stress their credentials of legitimization through 'substantive rationality'. (...) This policy of consumer socialism catered to people's desire for material comfort: the implication was that, although sovereignty would be limited, the state would do its best to make life relatively comfortable. In Hungary this was referred to as 'goulash communism'". For a critical appraisal of 'goulash communism' (the later phase of which was called, with equal irony, 'fridge socialism'), see Tibor Valuch's essay A 'gulyáskommunizmus' in Ignác Romsics (editor), *Mítoszok, legendák, tévhitek a 20. századi magyar történelemről*, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2002 (henceforth *Mítoszok*), pp361-390. However, as Kemp subsequently concedes, this did not mean that Kádár stopped currying popular favour through flirting with national symbols (pp480-1).

<sup>700</sup> Cf. Billig, p96-9 and 105-9, especially the discussion of the "ratified audience".

<sup>701</sup> Although this definition of representations is of my own devising, it was inspired by Durkheim's collective representations, as examined at the beginning of the chapter, as well as by Billig (*passim* and pp60-1) and Serge Moscovici's theory of social representations, particularly *The Phenomenon of Social Representations* (in *Social Representations*, edited by Gerard Duveen, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2000, pp18-77) and *Answers and Questions* (in *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 17, 1987, pp513-529). I also found the essays by Andy McKinlay, Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell (*Discourse Analysis and Social Representations*), by Rob Farr (*Theory and Method in the Study of Social Representations*) and by Michael Billig (*Studying the Thinking Society: Social Representations, Rhetoric, and Attitudes*), published in *Empirical Approaches to Social Representations*, edited by



Representations are neither straightforwardly objective nor value-neutral, but involve position-takings within the wider sphere of public discourse (hence their natural constituency is the public domain) and are largely the preserve of intellectuals and politicians, the chief denizens of that realm.<sup>702</sup> They always come into being with a distinct agenda, a practical purpose or goal to be attained. Consequently their validity cannot be assessed on the same basis as "objective" historical facts, they cannot simply be dismissed or discounted because of the dubious provenance, author bias, lack of historical "accuracy" or inconsistencies of their contents, but must be tested according to their success in sustaining identities and in reproducing culture.

## 4.2 Intellectuals as Producers of Representations

Intellectuals are defined for our purposes as producers of representations. Thus they belong to a very broad and fluid grouping, which can comprise a wide variety of professional occupations, from career academics to artists, filmmakers and journalists.

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Glynis M. Breakwell and David V. Canter, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, (pp134-156 and 15-38 and 39-62 respectively) very helpful.

<sup>702</sup> Politician and intellectual are not mutually exclusive categories. Indeed, my definition of intellectual below most decidedly includes politicians. The difference between them is that certain categories of intellectuals, for example historians place a premium on appearing "objective" (cf. Lorenz, *op. cit.*, pp28-40, 47-57, 62-4, 83-7 and 367-383 for the positivist conception of objectivity and the problems of applying it as a criterion to history) or "disinterested" (in the sense of "extraterritoriality", as outlined by Zygmunt Bauman in *Intellectuals in East-Central Europe: Continuity and Change*, in *East European Politics and Societies*, Volume One (2), 1987, pp162-186, henceforth *Intellectuals*, p164; disdain of partisanship, for which see p21 of his *Legislators and Interpreters*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1987, henceforth *Legislators*, and his discussion of "thinkers as such", in *Legislators*, pp22-3) as this forms the essence of their claim to authority and special status, whereas adhesion to a particular ideology, world view or programme for reform is the very stuff of politics, taking the sting out of charges of partiality. This is not to suggest that any representation can in reality be free of political bias: intellectuals are not "immune" to "subjectivity-creep", but often the ideological content will not necessarily be deliberate or conscious (taking the nation for granted being the case in point). Elie Kedourie is particularly scathing on the vanities and political ambitions of intellectuals. See Kedourie, pp39-40 and 43 and cf. Gellner on Kedourie's stance, p56.

Since we shall in subsequent chapters be focusing on textual representations created by intellectuals in Hungary and Romania, it is worthwhile dwelling on the specific context in which they carried out their work.

As Zygmunt Bauman explains, although the word “intellectual” itself is fairly recent, dating back to the Dreyfus affair,<sup>703</sup> the concept behind it can be traced further back: “How far back depends on whether we are simply interested in the presence of a separate category of people assigned the role of manipulation and interpretation of the elusive but crucial factors of social integration called values, meanings and symbols. On the other hand, we might be looking for a distinct ‘intellectual mode’, ‘idiom’, or ‘pattern’ articulated, codified and practiced by such manipulators and interpreters simultaneously as a tool of self-definition and as part of a bid for social power”.<sup>704</sup> In the first instance, the ancestry of the modern intellectual would be as old as human society itself, in the second, the birth of intellectuals occurred during the Age of Enlightenment.<sup>705</sup> Originating in the West, the intellectual idiom, once established,

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<sup>703</sup> Cf. Lewis S. Feuer, *Ideology and the Ideologists*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1975, pp205-6, which lists the 14<sup>th</sup> January 1898. On that day, the newspaper *L'Aurore* published a protest against the conduct of the Dreyfus trial in 1894, which was signed by distinguished names in French letters and science, including Anatole France and Zola. The editor, Georges Clemenceau, entitled it “Manifesto of the Intellectuals”.

<sup>704</sup> *Intellectuals*, pp164-5. In *Legislators*, he sets out his ideas at greater length. Here, for example, he makes the valuable point that the many definitions of the intellectual have one feature in common, which is that they are all self-definitions, in other words that they all involve an exercise in boundary-drawing. The underlying assumption on the part of the intellectuals is that they have the right to draw the boundary and, as a general rule, they remain silent about the divisive effects of the operation: „What most definitions refuse to admit is that the separation of the two spaces (and the legislating of a specific relationship between them) is the purpose and *raison d'être* of the definitional exercise, not its side-effect” (p8). Rather than any special qualities and possessions of the intellectuals as a group, it is this relationship, which constitutes them as a separate entity. The masked universal content of the self-definition is „the reproduction and reinforcement of a given social configuration, and –within it – a given (or claimed) status for the group” (p9). The enthronement of knowledge legitimates the social superiority of the intellectuals (p18). He therefore rejects what he tags as the „finger-painting” method, which attempts to build up a collective definition by enumerating skills, occupations, attitudes, biographical types and so on (p18). Instead: „We will treat the category of the intellectual as a structural element within the societal figuration, an element defined not by its intrinsic qualities, but by the place it occupies within the system of dependencies which such a figuration represents, and by the role it performs in the reproduction and development of the figuration” p19).

<sup>705</sup> *Intellectuals*, p165. Cf. *Legislators*, pp21-37.

became detachable. As a result, it could be grafted on to different structures, although substantive and functional changes accompanied the transplantation.<sup>706</sup> In Central and Eastern Europe states were, according to Bauman, little more than urban based bureaucratic systems imposed upon peasant communes and extensive local holdings owned by traditional landowners. There was nothing comparable to the Western-style absolutist state able to undermine the autonomy of intermediate levels of systemic integration with the consequence that the state could not seriously contemplate legislative initiatives genuinely affecting the conditions of its subjects. Hence: "The budding intelligentsia of East-Central Europe was, from its inception, confronted with the task of constructing a political body capable of effective action instead of merely converting the already existing state machinery to its rationalizing purposes".<sup>707</sup> As it travelled eastwards, the idiom raised its aspirations from an advisory role to the level of legislation itself: "Those who were to work out the shape of reason-dictated institutions had to shoulder simultaneously the responsibility for the construction and entrenchment of such institutions".<sup>708</sup>

A second vital difference between the region and the West was the lack of overlap between dynastic states and the jumble of ethnic and linguistic communities. The unrelatedness of the two eliminated the possibility that existing monarchies could ever employ cultural domination as one of the key props of their political rule: "This circumstance put at the sole disposal of the intelligentsia the enormous realm of would-be national integration where it encountered no competitors".<sup>709</sup> Intellectuals became national leaders, treating enclaves of local languages or dialects as the site of the true national home. In this way, political authority came to be seen as an emanation and supplement of cultural ascendancy rather than vice versa.

These two factors ensured that the separation between intellectual work and professionalized politics, the retreat of intellectuals into the cultural sphere and their subsequent preoccupation with the autonomy of culture were not carried over from the West.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>706</sup> *Intellectuals*, pp165-6.

<sup>707</sup> *Intellectuals*, p168.

<sup>708</sup> As above.

<sup>709</sup> As above.

<sup>710</sup> *Intellectuals*, p169.

Socially, a very high proportion of intellectuals in Central and Eastern Europe were recruited from the ranks of the gentry. The majority were the sons of landowners whose estates were too small to provide sufficient income for a life of leisure. The spread of universities catered to their demand for alternative vehicles of status-reproduction. Whereas the limits of land ownership seemed “natural” (in the sense that there is only so much to go round and crop yields can only be increased finitely), limits on the volume of learned men society could absorb appeared “artificial” and called for reform. The virtual monopoly of foreign elites in the state administration and judiciary system was either guaranteed by law or achieved because their language was the official medium of communication in politics, administration or the courts. Pushing for recognition of local languages was the obvious strategy to pursue. This gave rise to a split between the aforementioned political-administrative-judicial area, symbolically set apart by its foreign language and “civil society”, embracing popular arts and ideology, with a separate tongue of its own. These peculiar circumstances have encouraged a “tendency to view the relation between the political state and civil society as one of conflict and competition rather than consensus and mutual support” as well as according intellectuals (whose forefathers did not have to share spiritual leadership with political elites) a degree of veneration unknown in the West.<sup>711</sup> The intellectuals assumed the role of patrons (enjoying cultural hegemony over the backward, ignorant and superstitious), which ratified an asymmetry of power. In brief, the patrons had the right to command, the clients to obey.<sup>712</sup>

The radical intelligentsia, which did not allow itself to be absorbed by the *ancien régime*, saw political revolution as a natural extension of its programme. Shouldering the burden of political rule was but a consequence of its concern with the proper performance of the intellectual’s task. For the Bolsheviks, taking over the state was a ground-clearing operation for the building of a new society dictated by the precepts of reason and the laws of history. In order to carry out their programme, they formed themselves into a party and once they had succeeded in their endeavours to take control of the state they did not expect any disharmony between the new political power and the mission of the intellectuals. The divorce between the intellectuals and the state, which had taken place in the West, did not seem either expedient or

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<sup>711</sup> *Intellectuals*, p172.

<sup>712</sup> *Intellectuals*, p173. For details on the type of power relations this entails, see pp172-3.

desirable in Russia, whilst in the broader arena of Central and Eastern Europe, the political domination of the Communist party could be viewed as a perpetuation of earlier traditions of patronage.<sup>713</sup> Bauman concludes: "It is these elements of continuity which account for the remarkably close mutual engagement between the ruling party and the intelligentsia. Both could claim to be in the same business, to bear the same responsibilities, to share the same duties; both had to invoke the same legitimization in their respective bids for influence and elevated social positions; both had to recognize in each other's work an activity which they could not refuse legitimacy without sapping the ideological foundations of their own practices".<sup>714</sup> Rivalry and friction germinate in the same soil as agreement, however, and are ineradicable because of the "lateral, rather than processual nature of the continuity of idiom".<sup>715</sup> Party and intelligentsia exist side by side, as structurally separate categories, although the former requires the services of the latter to replenish its ranks and supply it with governing and managerial skills. At the same time, the party arrogates the sole right of initiative in the selection and dissemination of cultural values, the formation of opinions, the articulation of the criteria of moral and aesthetic judgement and decisions on the content of public education, thereby straying on to the intelligentsia's patch. Tension is exacerbated by the fact that a blend of coercion and ideological indoctrination is deployed in the everyday business of ruling: "The need to indoctrinate renders the intellectual tendency to dabble with values and ideas a direct threat to the very source of the system of domination. As long as it lasts, this systemic arrangement leaves no room for an autonomous civil society, except for strictly professional areas tightly confined within politically defined boundaries".<sup>716</sup> To summarise: for historical and structural reasons, even before the Communist takeovers, intellectuals in East-Central Europe have not been afraid to engage more directly in political activity than their counterparts in the West and this has not been

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<sup>713</sup> *Intellectuals*, pp174-7.

<sup>714</sup> *Intellectuals*, pp177-8.

<sup>715</sup> *Op. cit.*, p178.

<sup>716</sup> *Op. cit.*, p179. The disagreement over the distribution of surplus product, which rubs salt into the intellectuals' wounds is dealt with on pp179-80. On the distinction between the "intelligentsia" and the "educated elite", see pp180-2. Cf. also Katherine Verdery, *National Ideology Under Socialism*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1995 (originally 1991, henceforth *Verdery*), pp15-19.

viewed as an encroachment upon their autonomy or as a breach of professional propriety.<sup>717</sup>

### 4.3 The Internal Dynamics of the Field of Cultural Production

Having addressed the issue of the producers of representations, we shall now return to our examination of their nature and function. Representations belong to the field of cultural production, or, to be more precise, are located at the intersection of the field of cultural production and that of politics (in east as in west). In order to understand how change within opinion occurs and why, in spite of protestations to the contrary on the part of certain groups of intellectuals representations are not impartial, we must turn to Pierre Bourdieu's *The Field of Cultural Production*.<sup>718</sup>

The specific aspects of the field of cultural production arise from the mutual antagonism of two principles of consecration defined in opposition to one another, the heteronomous principle and the autonomous. As Bourdieu points out, "the generative, unifying principle of this "system" is the struggle, with all the contradictions it engenders"<sup>719</sup> which also endows it with a temporal dimension, since the history of the struggle can be traced back through the past.<sup>720</sup>

Heteronomy results from demand<sup>721</sup> and applies the same criteria of success as the "conventional" economy, in that it places a premium on high sales figures and profits in money. If the field were to disappear amongst others, this would be the principle

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<sup>717</sup> Bourdieu's field theory is Western-oriented and does not take into consideration the almost complete erasure of artistic and intellectual autonomy under a Communist regime (although to avoid oversimplification we must note that the extent of the subordination of cultural output to political needs was historically and socially variable). In spite of this, his depiction of the field of cultural production can fulfil a useful function as an ideal-type from which wider conclusions on the nature of representations can be drawn. Cf. also Verdery's account of the need to adjust Bourdieu's theories to make them compatible with the conditions prevailing in Communist societies in *Verdery*, pp17-18 and 91-97.

<sup>718</sup> Polity Press, Cambridge, 1993

<sup>719</sup> *Field*, p34.

<sup>720</sup> *Op. cit.*, p106.

<sup>721</sup> *Op. cit.*, p45.

that would survive.<sup>722</sup> The autonomous principle, by contrast, disdains commerciality and eschews worldly gain for the sake of a different kind of prestige, the approval of peers in the sub-field of restricted production, where the works of art are intended for the appreciation of fellow-producers rather than the public at large. Here, the traditional economy is reversed and material success is equated with artistic bankruptcy, selling out to pander to the tastes of the philistines. Although both groups of producers seek to accumulate symbolic capital, the logic of the field itself tips the balance in favour of the innovators who vaunt their disinterestedness "through the denunciation of the mercenary compromises or calculating manoeuvres of the adversary, so that disavowal of the "economy" is placed at the very heart of the field, as the principle governing its functioning and transformation".<sup>723</sup> Thus, the poorer and more obscure the artist, the greater the amount of symbolic capital he may feel he has at his disposal. Furthermore, "*discredit* increases as the audience grows and its specific competence declines, together with the value of the recognition implied in the act of consumption".<sup>724</sup> If the field were to become completely autonomous, this latter principle would prevail.<sup>725</sup>

The entire structure of the field is determined by the polarisation of these rival principles<sup>726</sup> and the fundamental dichotomy commercial/disinterested sets the parameters of what is considered legitimate and illegitimate. Within the field, the logic of its principles regulates the actions of agents as well as determining the implications of position-takings. There are only a certain number of possible position-takings and whenever a new style is launched, for example, this alters the significance of them all, without exception. This leads automatically to change: "change in the space of literary or artistic possibles is the result of change in the power relation which constitutes the space of positions. When a new literary or artistic group makes its presence felt in the field of literary or artistic production, the whole problem is transformed, since its coming into being, i.e. into difference,

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<sup>722</sup> *Op. cit.*, p38.

<sup>723</sup> *Op. cit.*, p79.

<sup>724</sup> *Op. cit.*, p48. Emphasis in original.

<sup>725</sup> *Op. cit.*, p38.

<sup>726</sup> *Op. cit.*, p115.

modifies and displaces the universe of possible options".<sup>727</sup> Thus the internal dynamics of the field itself dictate that change is both inevitable and permanent (since entry into the field can only be achieved by means of position-taking). Moreover, changes in one field can have repercussions on developments outside its specific confines.

The field of cultural production is but one amongst many fields of social activity. As we have seen, it takes a rejection of the established values of the field of economic production as its starting-point, reversing the criteria of success and failure applied there as a means of asserting its own independence. Cultural power in the form of symbolic capital can be acquired through participation in the cut and thrust of combat in the field without this being accompanied by an increase in the material prosperity of the producer concerned, disguising the fact that he continues to belong to the ranks of the dominated rather than the dominant group in the spectrum.<sup>728</sup> Because the logic of the autonomous principle pervades the field as a whole, the rewards of symbolic capital are imbued with greater moral and indeed absolute worth in the eyes of the agents themselves. However, habitus and field interact, predisposing individuals to discern their "vocation", the most appropriate position-taking for them in the field. It is in the propensity to take economic risks that the relationship between the field of cultural production and another field (that of power) is revealed:

"economic capital provides the conditions for freedom from economic necessity" and can be "the basis of self-assurance, audacity and indifference to profit" which is essential for a would-be innovator of the avant-garde.<sup>729</sup> An individual who, in spite of low status embarks on a trajectory within the field, may feel more inclined to try his hand at writing a best-seller or painting in a populist style simply because of the potential for profits. By the same token, a high concentration of economic and educational capital may make a career in cultural production more attractive in the first instance because of the freedom it confers. Conversely, a lack thereof may act as a deterrent because the pressure to earn a living will be correspondingly greater,

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<sup>727</sup> *Op. cit.*, p32.

<sup>728</sup> *Op. cit.*, p101.

<sup>729</sup> *Op. cit.*, p68. It could equally be argued that those who have so little income or social status that they have nothing to lose as it is, or that very young artists who wish to make a name for themselves are also impelled towards the avant-garde. Cf. pp 59-60.



outweighing other motivations. Necessity can be a major disincentive. Whereas it is impossible to draw generalised conclusions about the precise impact of the interaction of the fields, as this will depend on the individual, it is sufficient to note the interaction itself, since it affords us with an insight into how concerns which, on a superficial level, are the preserve of one specific realm easily intrude into another with which it denies having anything in common yet whose interests coincide with its own and with which it actively colludes.

The best illustration of this in the field of cultural production is the collective bad faith, which sustains the illusion of disinterestedness, the public repudiation of self-interest. Without this illusion, the field would be indistinguishable from the field of economic production. The conceit of cultural producers is to court fame and reputation, which pave the way for obtaining privilege and even the most sought-after prize of immortality in the pantheon, whilst denying that these attributes are what they aspire to, that pursuit of them would not only sully them, but would also be beneath their professional dignity.<sup>730</sup> Thus, the concerns at stake are similar to those at stake within the field of economic production: how to glean the maximum advantage from the investment of one's personal resources and abilities. The two concepts of power, cultural and economic, do not pose a threat to each other. Quite the opposite: acquisition of one type may actively enhance possession of the other, therefore they can be mutually reinforcing. One of the standard trappings of success in the economy is collection of artworks to give an air of respectability to wealth.<sup>731</sup> Cultural competence in the form of taste can considerably boost one's standing, compensating for many inadequacies just as symbolic capital can be used to command its "economic" counterpart.

Although Bourdieu restricts his analysis to art, literature and aesthetics, his model of change as the cumulative effect of minor displacements in position-takings stimulated by competition over resources and his recognition that even the espousal of disinterestedness hides a claim to status and power can usefully be extended to the output of intellectuals in general, including "serious" or academic historians. The

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<sup>730</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 74, 75 and 78-9.

<sup>731</sup> *Outline*, pp 196-7.

professional ethos, which separates the academic historian from the dilettante, functions as an entrance barrier to the field. Only those who pass the test of poring over documents buried in the recesses of archives and satisfying other standards set by the corps of adepts are granted admittance. Regulating access in this manner upholds the reputation of the peer-recognized experts and is the justification for their exalted status.<sup>732</sup>

In reality, none of the historian's acts of representation are disinterested since they stake a claim to consecration (acknowledgement of value by those members of the artistic or professional community enjoying prestige and authority and elevation to the ranks of the elite as well as possible inclusion in the canon<sup>733</sup>), recognition (by the public at large and by colleagues) or financial reward whether under the autonomous or heteronomous principle. Moreover, since the past can never be reconstructed in full some selection of what is likely to be of interest will occur, but such choices are always influenced by the more mundane considerations of attracting sponsors (grants, fellowships and the like), of what stands a reasonable chance of being published and, on a subtler level, by the dominant principle of classification, which acts as a background filter,<sup>734</sup> suggesting what knowledge is "worthwhile" as well as roughly outlining its contents. Expressed in slightly different terms, the principle of classification limits the repertoire of what is produced as well as what is likely to be presented to the literate public by means of publication and dissemination. Representations, even those claiming scientific neutrality, cannot help but be imbued with its preferences, shoring it up.<sup>735</sup>

Once the immediacy of the lived moment has faded, historical writing becomes the repository of public memory. Therefore on a further, less obvious level, history, particularly those prestigious works that make up the accepted canon (its volumes gracing the shelves of public libraries and educational establishments alike and

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<sup>732</sup> Cf. Ignác Romsics' delightful essay *A történetírás objektivitásának mítoszáról és a múlt mitizálásának elfogadhatatlanságáról*. In *Mítoszok*, pp24-25.

<sup>733</sup> Cf. Bourdieu, *Field*, pp50-52.

<sup>734</sup> In democracies. The tighter control of representations and their contents under Communism is dealt with in Chapter Three below.

<sup>735</sup> Cf. Billig, pp16-8 and 49-55 and, specifically on the effects of nationalism on history writing, Breuilly 1993, pp55-64.

cannibalized for textbooks), is inextricably entangled with the dominant principle of classification, deeply implicated in upholding the prevailing value-system.<sup>736</sup>

One further reason for singling out historians for particular scrutiny is that they have been particularly active participants in the construction of nationhood. In Hobsbawm's words: "For historians are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market. Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation *is* the past; what justifies one nation against others is the past and historians are the people who produce it. So my profession, which has always been mixed up in politics, becomes an essential component of nationalism. More so even than the ethnographers, philologists and other suppliers of ethnic and national services who have usually also been mobilized".<sup>737</sup>

Before concluding, it is worthwhile stressing a point, which might seem so obvious that it scarcely bears mentioning: intellectuals are not made overnight. They must gradually absorb knowledge, acquiring the skills of articulacy, participation in reasoned debate and critical analysis. Without these tools of the trade, they cannot go about the business of producing representations. Training through higher education is the swiftest route to obtaining them. This requires resources, both infrastructural

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<sup>736</sup> Cf. Szporluk, p166 and Billig's discussion of "common sense" in sociology (Billig, pp51-55). I would also briefly add a few speculations of my own on the nature of history as an academic pursuit: history contributes to the understanding of what is by showing how it was arrived at, mapping the path, which led to it. It is not the explicit role of history to criticize what is (although historians frequently do). Instead, its subject matter is the past, which needs to be explained and critically analyzed. Furthermore, historical writing always combines a list of "raw" facts (dates, lists of participants) with interpretations. The latter entails adopting a stance or viewpoint, which is open to contestation.

<sup>737</sup> *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Europe Today*, in Balakrishnan, p255, emphasis in the original. Having reviewed the relevant literature, I feel safe in concluding that almost the only issue upon which scholars of nationalism can agree is the importance of shared historical memories in creating a nation. Smith's prolific writings on history, memories and nationhood are unmatched in depth and excellence. See *Ethnic*, pp25-6, 177-183, 191-200; *Smith 1991*, pp65-8, 91-8, 161 and 163-4; *Myths*, p16 for his definition of "ethno-history", pp29-55 for *Nationalism and the Historians*, 60-1, 163-186 for *Gastronomy or Geology? The Role of Nationalism in the Reconstruction of Nations*. Cf. Kedourie, pp71-4 and Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism*, p3. See also *Historians as Nation-Builders*, edited by Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak, Macmillan Press, Houndmills, 1988 and *Historians in Politics*, edited by Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse, Sage, London, 1974.

(universities, colleges) and cultural (fluency in the mother tongue and any other language of teaching). Depriving a collectivity of the means to nurture its own intellectuals to replenish the ranks of the retired and deceased severely inhibits its ability to reproduce itself. Such an effect is magnified if the collectivity in question is submerged within a larger, ethnically, linguistically or culturally divergent community. The situation faced by the Hungarian minority in Romania is emblematic in this respect. Exposed to constant suspicions of disloyalty, the open use of Hungarian symbols by its members could risk being interpreted as a blatant provocation, leaving language and representations as the primary means of cultural reproduction. As a result, they assumed even greater significance than they would have under more "normal" circumstances.

## ***Conclusion***

In the case study which follows, we shall endeavour to pursue the core theoretical issues raised, namely the link between identity and the dominant principle of classification; the effect of the national principle of classification on representations of identity, particularly minority identity; how collective identities evolve and are reproduced; the strategies designed to undermine identities and the counter-strategies to preserve them in a hostile environment; the relationship between representations (and identity) and politics (the contextuality of representations) and the impact of both principles of classification and representations upon perceptions.

## Chapter Two: Hungarian Minority Identity in Transylvania from the Treaty of Trianon to the Vienna Awards

### Introduction

“...it matters a lot *what* a nation imagines itself to be; in other words, the significance lies in the *content* of its nationalist self-image. It matters whether that image defines the nation as naturally peaceful or warrior-like, naturally democratic or authoritarian, sympathetic to new economic methods or traditionally agrarian, open to all who wish to join it or defined by racial (and therefore impenetrable) criteria”.

Roman Szporluk.<sup>738</sup>

In this chapter, we shall examine representations of Hungarian identity in both Hungary and Transylvania (dealt with chronologically) to show how they diverged after Trianon. Throughout I shall be focusing in depth on the work of individual intellectuals whose contributions explicitly address the issue in hand and whose work is emblematic of wider currents of thought. Before proceeding to the analysis, however, a brief sketch of Hungarian history is required to set the scene.

The Hungarian tribes arrived in the Carpathian Basin around 895.<sup>739</sup> According to historian Lajos Kontler, Transylvania appears to be the first portion of land where they gained a foothold, each of the seven chieftains having erected an earthen “castle” (hence the German designation for Transylvania, *Siebenbürgen*).<sup>740</sup> Founder of the Hungarian state, Saint István (around 975-1038) received his royal insignia from Pope Sylvester II, his coronation symbolising the full conversion of the country to Christianity and its inclusion amongst the monarchies of the West.<sup>741</sup> At the same

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<sup>738</sup> Szporluk, p164. Emphasis in original.

<sup>739</sup> See László Makkai, *The Hungarians' Prehistory, their Conquest of Hungary and their Raids to the West to 955*, in *Sugar 1994*, pp8-14.

<sup>740</sup> Kontler, p43.

<sup>741</sup> Kontler, pp52-3. As one of the most symbolically-charged figures in Hungarian history, Saint István has proven particularly attractive to historians with a correspondingly large corpus of works assessing his role. Of these, I would recommend the following: Bálint Hóman, *Szent István*, Kairosz Kiadó,

time, his establishment of an institutional framework modelled on existing Western patterns signalled the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle with an emphasis on property and security.<sup>742</sup> Due to its geographical location, the medieval kingdom constantly had to fend off expansionist challenges from foreign powers. Initially the Germans constituted the main threat, but from the early fifteenth century onwards the Ottoman Turks proved the greater menace.<sup>743</sup>

The golden age of Hungary (reaching its zenith during the reign of King Mátyás from 1464 to 1490)<sup>744</sup> came to a bitter end at the Battle of Mohács on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1526 where the cream of the Hungarian nobility and their king, Lajos II fell, leaving the road to Buda wide open to Süleyman the Magnificent's troops.<sup>745</sup> The Hungarian estates elected two kings simultaneously after Lajos II's death, a state of affairs, which eventually led to the division of the kingdom into three parts. Most of the nobles rallied around János Szapolyai, whilst a smaller group of magnates favoured Habsburg Archduke (and Bohemian king) Ferdinand I.<sup>746</sup> The Ottomans profited from the wranglings to persuade the Szapolyai faction that they were true allies. On 29<sup>th</sup> August 1541, Süleyman's armies entered Budapest on the pretext of protecting the now deceased Szapolyai's infant son's rights against Ferdinand. Two days later, he assigned the lands east of the Tisza river and Transylvania to János II and so the life of the latter as an independent (at least as far as internal matters were concerned)

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Budapest, 2000 (originally 1939); Zoltán Magyar, *Szent István a magyar kultúrtörténetében*, Helikon Kiadó, Budapest, 1996; László Veszprémy (editor), *Szent István és a magyar államalapítás*, Osiris, Budapest, 2002; Iván Bertényi, *Szent István és öröksége 1000-1440*, Vince Kiadó, Budapest, 1997; Gyula Kristó, *Szent István király*, Vince Kiadó, Budapest, 2001 and György Györffy, *István király és műve*, Balassi Kiadó, Budapest, 2000 (third edition). On the early history of the Hungarian state, see László Makkai, *The Foundation of the Hungarian Christian State 950-1196*, in *Sugar 1994*, pp15-22 and his *Transformation into a Western-Type State, 1196-1301*, in *idem*, pp23-33.

<sup>742</sup> Kontler, p53.

<sup>743</sup> Kontler, p65.

<sup>744</sup> On Mátyás, whose epithet "the Just" testifies to his popularity amongst his subjects, see Kontler, pp118-128. See also András Kubinyi, *Mátyás király*, Vince Kiadó, Budapest, 2001 and János Bak, *The Late Medieval Period, 1382-1526*, pp70-76 in *Sugar 1994*, pp54-82.

<sup>745</sup> Kontler, p136 and János Bak, *op.cit.*, pp80-82.

<sup>746</sup> Ferenc Szakály, *The Early Ottoman Period, including Royal Hungary, 1526-1606*, p83 in *Sugar 1994*, pp83-99.

Principality began.<sup>747</sup> Ferdinand, having set up court in Pozsony (Bratislava), repeatedly attempted to retake Buda, to no avail. When in 1547 envoys of Emperor Charles Vth negotiated a five year armistice with Süleyman at Edirne, the situation in Royal Hungary settled down somewhat.<sup>748</sup> Ottoman Hungary stretched from Lake Balaton northward to the Danube and eastward to the Tisza and the Transylvanian border, moving further east and west after the conquests of 1566.<sup>749</sup>

It was not until 1686 that the tide turned against the Turks with the liberation of Buda by Christian forces led by Charles of Lorraine. A series of victories followed and on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1687, the Hungarian nobles at Pozsony (Bratislava) recognised the House of Habsburg's hereditary right to the Hungarian throne by way of gratitude to Leopold I.<sup>750</sup> In an edict, which became known as the *Diploma Leopoldinum* of October 1690, the latter bestowed upon himself the title of Prince of Transylvania, reconfirming its separate constitutional status.<sup>751</sup>

Having quelled the uprising led by Ferenc Rákóczi II,<sup>752</sup> the Habsburgs consolidated their position in Hungary and did not have to respond to a serious challenge until the 1848 Revolution and Hungarian War of Independence. The Revolution followed similar events in Palermo, Paris, Piedmont and Vienna. Prompted by public unease over the monarchy's financial difficulties, Lajos Kossuth, a deputy in the Lower House of the Hungarian Diet (still in Pozsony) and enemy of feudal privileges took the floor on 3<sup>rd</sup> March to insist upon the immediate realisation of the opposition's full reform programme (the German translation of which contributed to the atmosphere in

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<sup>747</sup> Kontler, p142 and Szakály, *op.cit.*, pp83-5. The truce only lasted for four years, however. Turkish aggression expanded their territorial gains on Hungarian soil, the war only ending when the second Peace of Edirne was signed in 1568. Szakály, *op.cit.*, pp86-7 and Kontler, pp146-7.

<sup>748</sup> Ferenc Szakály, *op.cit.*, p86 and Kontler, p146.

<sup>749</sup> Szakály, *op.cit.*, pp86-7. On the period up to the Peace of Szatmár/Satu Mare, see Péter Katalin, *The Later Ottoman Period and Royal Hungary, 1606-1711* in Sugar 1994, pp100-120 and Kontler, pp148-190. On semi-independent Transylvania, see Peter Sugar, *The Principality of Transylvania*, in Sugar 1994, pp121-137.

<sup>750</sup> Kontler, pp182-3 and Katalin, *op.cit.*, pp116-7.

<sup>751</sup> Kontler, p183.

<sup>752</sup> When Ferenc Rákóczi II was vanquished Habsburg domination of Hungary was placed on a secure footing. See footnote 778 below.

Vienna sparking revolt there).<sup>753</sup> An address to the crown summarising the petitions was drafted and with the approval of the Upper House a delegation set off for Vienna on 15<sup>th</sup> March to present the document to the ruler. On the same day revolution broke out in Pest with József Irinyi's Twelve Points going beyond Kossuth's impassioned speech printed along with poet Sándor Petőfi's *National Song*. At the head of a crowd numbering around 20,000 Irinyi, Petőfi, the novelist Mór Jókai and other radical intellectuals made their way to the city halls of Pest and Buda and then to the Gubernium (Viceregal Council), all of which agreed to the demands. Count Lajos Batthyány was appointed Prime Minister of Hungary on 18<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>754</sup> His government (with Kossuth as Minister of Finance) lasted until September. On 11<sup>th</sup> April, a new constitution (which included the reunion of Hungary and Transylvania) was accepted by Ferúinand Vth. Two intractable problems plunged Hungary into war against Austria. The first was the lack of clarity over finances, foreign affairs and the military, the second centred on Hungary's relations with Croatia-Slavonia and the national minorities.<sup>755</sup> His appreciation of international developments spurred Kossuth to make another important speech in July, where he was able to persuade deputies to vote over 40 million forints of credit and 200,000 recruits for a national army, the *honvéd*. On 31<sup>st</sup> August the Austrian Wessenberg administration issued a memorandum arguing that the setting up of separate Ministries of War and Finance in accordance with the April Laws (the new constitution) were contrary to the Pragmatic

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<sup>753</sup> Kossuth (1802-1894) became both a national hero and an international celebrity. He founded the daily *Pesti Hírlap* in 1841, agitating for reform in its columns. Again, the literature on Kossuth is vast due to his iconic status, but I have found the following volumes on Kossuth, the Revolution and the War of Independence useful: Domokos Kosáry, *Kossuth Lajos a reformkorban*, Osiris, Budapest, 2002 (originally 1946); György Diószegi and Mónika Bakos, *Kossuth Lajos és a Pesti Hírlap a társadalmi változtatásokért*, Variant-Média Reklám és Kiadó Kft., Budapest, 2001; István Nemeskürty, *1848-49 "Kik érted haltak, szent világszabadság"*, Aquila Könyvek, LAP-ICS Kiadó, Budapest, 1998 (original 1977) and Sándor Pethő, *A szabadságharc eszmei*, Holnap Kiadó, Budapest, 2000 (original 1916).

<sup>754</sup> Batthyány (1807-1849) was executed on 6<sup>th</sup> October 1849 as part of the Austrian campaign of reprisals against the insurgents.

<sup>755</sup> Hungary refused liability for paying any share of state debt and wanted to enjoy the right to issue its own banknotes (which it proceeded to do on 6<sup>th</sup> September). There was no clear demarcation between the powers of the respective Ministers of War (*Kontler*, p250). On Croatia-Slavonia and the minorities, see *Kontler*, pp250-1 and István Deák, *The Revolution and the War of Independence, 1848-1849*, pp216-7 in *Sugar 1994*, pp209-234.



Sanction, declaring them null and void. A 50,000-strong army crossed the Hungarian border at the beginning of September.<sup>756</sup> Hungary held out against the Austrians until 5<sup>th</sup> October 1849.<sup>757</sup>

Suppression of the Revolution ushered in the period of neo-absolutism, but the Hungarian spirit was not completely broken. Having been expelled from the German Confederation after its defeat at the Battle of Königgrätz, Austria was finally forced to adopt a more conciliatory stance towards Hungarian calls for a greater say in the running of their possessions. The Compromise of 1867, passed by the Hungarian Parliament on 20<sup>th</sup> March stipulated that the two halves of the empire were to be self-governing states as far as domestic issues were concerned with their own responsible ministries. Defence, foreign affairs and the finances needed to cover these were to be managed by joint ministries answerable to the emperor and to delegations consisting of sixty members of each Parliament. The ruler was supreme warlord and reserved the right to grant prior approval to any bills destined for Parliament. Transylvania was reincorporated into the kingdom of Hungary and Franz Joseph was crowned king on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1867.<sup>758</sup>

The final demise of the historic kingdom of Hungary came with the Treaty of Trianon (entry into force 26<sup>th</sup> July 1921), which reduced Hungary's territory from 282,000 to 93,000 square kilometres and its population by 43% from 18.2 to 7.6 million, giving rise to what has gone down in Hungarian history as the "Trianon trauma".<sup>759</sup>

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<sup>756</sup> Kontler, p252. The Pragmatic Sanction, dating from 1713 proclaimed that all Habsburg lands were indivisible, their inheritance was based on primogeniture, including the female line should the male die out and strictly defined the practicalities of the female line's succession (Horst Haselsteiner, *Cooperation and Confrontation between Rulers and the Noble Estates, 1711-1790*, p144 in Sugar 1994, pp138-164).

<sup>757</sup> The famous unconditional surrender of Hungarian troops to the Russians at Világos/Şiria in August did not mark the end of the conflict (see István Deák, *op.cit.*, p233).

<sup>758</sup> Kontler, pp277-9. See also Tibor Frank, *Hungary and the Dual Monarchy, 1867-1890*, in Sugar 1994, pp252-266.

<sup>759</sup> Romsics 2000, p145. That the Trianon trauma has become deeply ingrained in the Hungarian psyche is attested to by the sheer volume of literature on the subject. In *Trianon utóélete. Válogatás a magyar nyelvű irodalom bibliográfiájából 1920-2000*, XX. Század Intézet, Kairosz Kiadó, Budapest, 2000, Archimédész Szidiropulosz lists a total of 1538 items on the subject published in Hungarian (and Hungary) alone, a further 1785 in the Carpathian Basin for the period 1948-88. Between 1989 and 2000, 228 new works were printed. On the popular myths that began to surround Trianon and the signing, see Balázs Ablonczy, *Trianon-legendák*, in *Mítoszok*, pp132-161. Pál Teleki, one of the

## 2.1 Hungarianness

Never before had the national doxa been issued such a challenge and the pervasive conviction of an injustice having been committed at Trianon was coupled with introspection in an attempt to refute the charges and slanders levelled against the Hungarians by representatives of the successor states.

Redefining and reasserting Hungarianness took place against the backdrop of the upheaval the treaty caused and amidst the ferment of notions concerning race and destiny, superiority and inferiority and fitness to rule or be ruled circulating in the broader European context. The undertaking assumed a variety of forms, of which we shall examine three: Hungarianness as vocation, as characteristics and as essence.<sup>760</sup>

## 2.2 Hungarianness as Vocation: Tibor Joó

In his *The Concept of the Hungarian Nation (A Magyar Nemzet Eszme)* from 1939,<sup>761</sup> Tibor Joó reviews the peculiar features of the indigenous Hungarian idea of what constituted the nation and how Hungary's enthusiastic embracing of an alien nationalism imported from the West in the name of progress sowed the seeds of the

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leaders of the peace delegation and later Prime Minister, called the conditions created by the Treaty unbearable and untenable (*idem*, p148).

<sup>760</sup> For the historical evolution of the concept of national character, see *Smith 1991*, pp84-91. Cf. Eduard Spranger, *Wie erfasst man einen Nationalcharakter?* Verlag von Quelle und Meyer, Leipzig, 1939; Mihály Szegedy-Maszák, *The Idea of National Character: A Romantic Heritage*, in: Peter Boerner (ed.), *Concepts of National Identity, An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 1986, pp45-61; Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (eds.), *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, New Haven, 1995; Frederick Hertz, *Nationality in History and Politics*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Company, London, 1944; Erich Kahler, *Der Deutsche Charakter in der Geschichte Europas*, Europa-Verlag, Zürich, 1937; Graf Hermann Keyserling, *Das Spektrum Europas*, Niels Kampmann Verlag, Heidelberg, 1928 and Ernest Barker, *National Character and the Factors in its Formation*, Harper, New York and London, 1927.

<sup>761</sup> Franklin Társulat, Budapest. On this work, see Barany, *op. cit.*, pp291-2. Born in 1901 in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*, Joó wrote on the philosophy of history and in the field of the history of ideas, earning a living as a librarian at the University of Szeged and later the Széchenyi National Library. A contributor to journals such as *Nyugat* and *Magyar Szemle* and opponent of the spread of German Fascism to Hungary, his life was cut tragically short when he died of wounds sustained during the siege of Budapest in 1945.

country's destruction and dismemberment. The origin of a nation is to be found in its consensual subscription to a unifying concept:

"The nation is a *human* community. The human intellect organises it from the natural state of instinctive cohabitation over a long period of development within a series of intermediate conditions. What renders the community a nation is a concept accepted by the community from its existence as a nation and which governs its life as an ideal and an aim. Its members are soldered together into a nation through the faith they place *in this concept*.

Both the idea and the national community itself are historical formations and as such undergo change and development. A further concomitant of being situated within history is that development has different implications for individual national units and hence the accepted concept of what makes up the nation can vary from one nation and one era to another".<sup>762</sup>

The ancient Hungarian model of national belonging had its roots in the nomadic way of life of the *honfoglalók* [the settlers who occupied the Hungarian homeland],<sup>763</sup> characterised not by divisive insistence on homogeneity, but on tolerant incorporation of diversity, as exemplified in Saint István's "Exhortations"<sup>764</sup> where the King set out the benefits of a conscious policy of extending hospitality:

"Because as guests come from different lands they bring with them different kinds of language, customs, weapons and learning, all of which adorns the kingdom, exalts the

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<sup>762</sup> *Op. cit.*, p5. Throughout all translations are my own except where otherwise acknowledged.

Emphasis in original. In Joó's opinion Hungary's naive espousal of Western ideals merely speeded up the inevitable decline of the native ideas as the country had been progressively weakened by the bloodshed of the previous 200 years to resist, see p22.

<sup>763</sup> On the origins of the Hungarians, see *Kontler*, pp33-43 and Gábor Vékony, *Magyar őstörténet, magyar honfoglalás*, Nap Kiadó, Budapest, 2002. The term *honfoglalók* dates from the post-1848 period, with Mór Jókai using the verb *hont foglalni* in the 1850s. Having made it into the Hungarian dictionary of the 1860s, the historian Károly Szabó popularised it further. The lack of early sources on Hungarian origins meant that even Anonymous and Simon Kézai, authors of the two most famous *gesta* in the 13<sup>th</sup> century had to resort to speculation (Vékony, pp198-9). The seven tribes made their way across the Carpathians to their new homeland in 896.

<sup>764</sup> Szent István (Saint Stephen) (ca. 975-1038), whose pagan name had been Vajk, was converted and christened at Esztergom, receiving royal insignia from Pope Sylvester II. He was canonised in 1083. The Exhortations were addressed to his son, Imre who died in a hunting accident in 1031 (*Kontler*, pp52-59). The precise date on which they were written is unknown (On the Exhortations, see Géza Érszegi, *Árpád-kori Legendák és Intelmek*, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp47-55).

court and discourages the audacity of foreigners. Verily the country with but one language and morality is weak and fragile. Hence I enjoin upon you, my son, to nurture them with benevolence and honour so that they prefer to reside with you than elsewhere' ".<sup>765</sup>

The nomadic lifestyle of the Hungarian tribes, warrior shepherds, whose natural community was that of the empire, required a radically different set of characteristics from those of settled, agrarian peoples:

"constant vigilance, weighing up circumstances, the ability of keen discernment, swift and practical decision-making, consistency in carrying out decisions, flexibility, resoluteness and ingenuity, virtue and authoritative will, unfaltering intellectual alertness".<sup>766</sup>

The endless steppes were open, unbounded (and consequently unboundaried), a landscape in which peoples mixed, literally and metaphorically, and where rulers fought their way to power, deposed by internal strife or an overwhelming external force. The conquerors had neither the strength nor the time to concern themselves with the niceties of the language and customs of their subjects, to meddle with them by experimenting in assimilation. Instead the only viable method of domination was for them to place themselves above their subjects whilst allowing the latter to retain their distinctiveness. In this way diversity became the basis of pride and self-esteem. The strategy of the nomad was that of accepting new elements into the community, which subsequently identified themselves with it, accepting its traditions and serving its interests and the entire empire was held together by the figure of the ruler.

Obtaining a share in his power and prestige was not the exclusive preserve of members of his tribe, but open to all with the relevant qualities and abilities.<sup>767</sup>

This represented the heritage of the Hungarian tribes at the time of the blood pact and the adoption of the name of the leading tribe to designate the whole (magyar), both of which symbolically united them as brothers.<sup>768</sup> This is recognised as the birth of the

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<sup>765</sup> *A Magyar Nemzet Eszme*, p27.

<sup>766</sup> *Op. cit.*, p33.

<sup>767</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 34-37, 39.

<sup>768</sup> The *vérszerződés* (blood pact) is recorded by the chronicler Anonymous, according to whom the decision to leave the ancestral homeland of Scythia was motivated by overcrowding. The leaders of the seven Hungarian tribes (Álmos, Előd, Küнд, Óнд, Tas, Huba and Tétény), unable to bear the lack of space any longer, held a council at which they agreed to set off in search of more congenial

Hungarian nation.<sup>769</sup> During the Middle Ages, Hungarian kings were all too happy to appropriate the myths of shared genealogy with Attila and the Huns, extended later to include the magyar people.<sup>770</sup>

In establishing a centralised state, Saint István perpetuated the notion of the ruler embodying or personifying the unity of his subject peoples, who were all Hungarian simply by virtue of being under his sovereignty. Awareness of being a nation awakened gradually, although not every inhabitant of the territories of the Hungarian crown was considered to be a member of the nation, however. That was a privilege reserved for the nobility, whose ranks were continually added to as a token of appreciation for loyalty shown irrespective of whether the individuals thus rewarded were magyar or from another of the subject peoples.<sup>771</sup>

When the Árpád dynasty died out the concept of national unity was transferred from the person of the king to the Holy Crown itself.<sup>772</sup> The wearer of the crown continues to reign above all peoples, belonging to none and rights, freedoms and privileges stem from nobility.<sup>773</sup> With the fragmentation of Christendom and the increasing secularisation of the state, dynastic and national interests were perceived as converging, the monarch acting in their defence. The Hungarian nobility gained a sense of forming an independent entity with a set of responsibilities and a degree of

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surroundings. They chose Pannonia, rumoured to have belonged to Attila, from whom Álmos, father of Árpád, was descended. Before departing they elected Álmos leader and commander, swearing loyalty to him and his line, opening their veins and mixing the shed blood in a vessel as confirmation of their oath (Anonymous, *A magyarok cselekedetei*; Kézai Simon *A magyarok cselekedetei*, Osiris, Budapest, 2001, pp12-13).

<sup>769</sup> *Op. cit.*, p43.

<sup>770</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp43-46.

<sup>771</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp54, 55, 58, 60, 61.

<sup>772</sup> Árpád was Álmos' son. The 23 kings and five Grand Dukes of the house of Árpád ruled from the beginning of the 9th century until the death of András III in 1301 (his daughter Erzsébet, the last of the female line, passing away in 1338). For biographical sketches of each member of the dynasty, see Gyula Kristó and Ferenc Makk, *Az Árpádok fejedelmek és királyok*, Szukits Könyvkiadó, Debrecen, 2001.

<sup>773</sup> *Op. cit.*, p64.

sovereignty. Their calling was to repel pagan incursions, be the bastion of the West against the raging storms from the East.<sup>774</sup>

Rejections of foreign interference were aimed at protecting the territorial integrity of the kingdom; the criterion for Hungarianness was fidelity to the shared vocation and the freedom of the nation was equated with the freedom of the nobility.<sup>775</sup>

Hungarianness was blind to extraction. In Joó's evocative phrase: "It is a nation above ethnicity".<sup>776</sup> What forged the Hungarian nobles together was no longer basking in a glorious past and triumphant present, but the experience of having no allies to turn to, no outside resources to draw on and the threat of impending annihilation.<sup>777</sup> Following the Turkish occupation and the bloody struggles between *kuruc* (supporters of Thököly and Rákóczi) and *labanc* (pro-Habsburg) factions yet another task emerged: protecting Hungarian liberty.<sup>778</sup> The true Hungarian was

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<sup>774</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp68-74. Apart from the Mongol invasion of 1241 during the reign of Béla IV, Hungary had to defend itself against the Turks from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards (*Kontler*, p65; on the Mongol invasions, pp77-8 and for the struggle against the Turks, pp103-190).

<sup>775</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp85-92.

<sup>776</sup> *Op. cit.*, p91. Joó delights in the unsullied intellectuality of the Hungarian nation, in its derivation from human artifice rather than nature.

<sup>777</sup> *Op. cit.*, p93.

<sup>778</sup> The Battle of Mohács (29th August 1526), a disastrous defeat against the Turks sealed Hungary's fate. The 25,000 Hungarian troops were outnumbered three to one and within two hours at least 10,000 infantry, almost the entire cavalry and 35 barons and prelates lay dead on the field. King Lajos II fell from his horse whilst in flight and drowned in a stream (*Kontler*, p136). Twelve days later, the Sultan's army marched into Buda, the Hungarian court having evacuated to Pozsony (Bratislava). Two claimants to the throne emerged, János Szapolyai (who had himself elected as monarch by the diet at Székesfehérvár on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1526) and Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria (elected as Ferdinand I on 17<sup>th</sup> December at Pozsony). The balance tipped in favour of the latter with the intervention of German mercenaries in 1527, pushing Szapolyai first to Transylvania and subsequently Poland. Szapolyai sought the help of Süleyman against Ferdinand and in the Treaty of Istanbul was recognised as the sole lawful ruler of the lands conquered by the Sultan, lulling the nobility into the belief that the Turks were allies. Realising that his insistence on reigning only benefited the Turks, Szapolyai became reconciled to bequeathing the country to Ferdinand. The Treaty of Várad, signed by representatives of both kings on 24<sup>th</sup> February 1538, stipulated that Ferdinand would inherit the throne after Szapolyai's death. However, Szapolyai's new wife bore him a son in 1540 and on his deathbed he took an oath from his barons to disregard the Treaty. The bishop of Várad had the infant proclaimed king János II and acknowledged by the Porte. In 1541 Buda was taken over by the Ottomans and occupied for the next 145 years. On 31<sup>st</sup> August the royal household moved to Transylvania, assigned to János II for

governance in return for an annual tribute. Together with the *Részek* (or Partium, the Eastern Hungarian counties) the Principality of Transylvania had begun to assume its definitive contours. Although dependent on the Ottoman Empire, it enjoyed autonomous control of its internal affairs. (Kontler, pp139-142). Leopold I, Habsburg king of Hungary, by way of retaliation against repeated acts of disloyalty on the part of the Hungarians (including an abortive revolt by Ferenc Rákóczi I in 1670) declared that they had forfeited the right to govern themselves, setting up a seven-member Gubernium and suspending the constitution. Two-thirds of the Hungarian fortress soldiers were disbanded upon the confiscation of the garrisons by the German military. Having withdrawn to Transylvania, these soldiers first dubbed themselves *bujdosók* (outlaws) before adopting the name of *kurucok*. The *kuruc* movement received a boost following the Treaty of Warsaw between France, Poland and Transylvania in 1677. Louis XIV offered Mihály Apafi, Prince of Transylvania, an annual subsidy in return for supporting the *kurucok*. Their commander was Imre Thököly (1657-1705), who headed an uprising in 1678. During that year and in 1680, he took several fortresses and towns in Upper Hungary, although the lack of infantry meant he could not hold them for long. In 1682, he married Ferenc Rákóczi I's widow Ilona Zrínyi (whose vast estates enhanced his power base) and the Porte appointed him Prince of Upper Hungary. Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa's army had been besieging Vienna in 1683 when an alliance of Christian troops came to aid of the Habsburg capital, routing the Turks and pursuing them as far as Esztergom. The Holy League organised in March 1684 attacked Buda and Thököly's Upper Hungary. By the end of the following year most *kuruc* fortresses had fallen into Habsburg hands (with the exception of Munkács, which they clung on to thanks to Ilona Zrínyi until 1688). Thököly was arrested by the Pasha of Várad in October. Although released shortly afterwards, he was compelled to leave Hungary along with the Turkish forces. Buda was liberated on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1686. When Apafi died in 1690 and Vienna refused to recognise the succession of his son, Thököly seized the opportunity and was elected by the Diet as its Prince. Defeated by Ludwig Margrave of Baden, he was exiled to Asia Minor and died in Nicomedia in 1705. The *Diploma Leopoldinum* of 16<sup>th</sup> October 1690 settled the constitutional status of Transylvania until 1848: it was administered as a separate province of Hungary with its own laws (Kontler, pp175-184). Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676-1735, son of Ilona Zrínyi by Ferenc Rákóczi I) issued a manifesto calling for the liberation of Hungary from the Habsburg yoke from the castle of Brzeźany in Poland on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1703. A month later he arrived in Hungary under banners adorned with the slogan *Cum Deo pro Patria et Libertate*. After the patent of 28<sup>th</sup> August, promising exemption from taxes and manorial obligations to serfs who joined his army, commoners flocked to his cause. In the autumn, Habsburg forces were expelled from the north-western areas of Hungary and Rákóczi was elected Prince of Transylvania on 8<sup>th</sup> July 1704 then Commanding Prince of Hungary in 1705 (the year in which Joseph I succeeded to the Habsburg throne). Changes in the international situation led to the isolation of the *kuruc* state and the defeat its armies suffered at the Battle of Trencsén in 1708 was a taste of things to come. While Rákóczi was absent in Poland conducting talks with the Russian tsar, his general, Sándor Károlyi signed the Peace of Szatmár on 30<sup>th</sup> April 1711. The *kuruc* army surrendered the next day (Kontler, pp185-189).

willing to lay down his life in defence of the traditional freedom, which was no less than the safeguard of national existence. Joó concludes from this:

"Being a Hungarian therefore is not an easy and natural thing. It is not a state, which can be obtained free. It is not enough to be born Hungarian. We can be so bold as to say that you cannot simply be *born* Hungarian. You must *become* Hungarian. Being Hungarian is not synonymous with happiness. It does not mean an advantage, safety, a gift. The Hungarian state of being is eternal anxiety and the bitter self-esteem of a past that has fallen into ruin".<sup>779</sup>

Indeed even in the darkest hour Hungarians did not fall prey to the temptation of resorting to assimilation out of loathing for the foreign in their midst. Even Transylvania's brief spell as an independent state did not unleash such destructive emotions. Nor did it entail an abandonment of the national ideal:

"Transylvania's secession and move towards independence as a state did not affect the national consciousness of its sons. Bocskai deemed its temporary independence necessary purely in the interests of the nation."<sup>780</sup> From beginning to end the Hungarians of Transylvania and of Hungary felt they were the sons of the same nation. The nation was not bound to the state then either".<sup>781</sup>

The turning point, when national minorities became an issue, came when the Hungarians adopted the contents and the form of Western nationalism thereby renting asunder what had been one. In Joó's eyes the primary flaw of the new concept of social organisation was its reliance on externalities:

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<sup>779</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp95-96. Emphasis in original.

<sup>780</sup> István Bocskai (1557-1606) was Prince of Transylvania from 1605-6. Having been staunchly pro-Habsburg, he became disillusioned after being interned in Prague for criticising General Giorgio Basta's reign of terror in Transylvania. He was then persuaded to resist the Habsburgs, winning a victory against them on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1604 at the head of an army of *hajdus*, irregular reserve units of the imperial forces, originally herders of cattle. Basta gradually withdrew westwards. Following his election as Prince of Transylvania on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1605, Bocskai decided to compromise on the issue of accepting a crown from the Porte. Requiring assistance to depose his brother Rudolph I, Archduke Matthias agreed, in the Peace of Vienna (23<sup>rd</sup> June, 1606) to observe the rights of Protestants, to fill the office of Palatine, to refrain from appointing foreigners to posts in the Hungarian administration and from taking legal action that violated the law. Bocskai was confirmed as Transylvanian Prince, endowing the *hajdus* with privileges (*Kontler*, pp165-6).

<sup>781</sup> *Op. cit.*, p97.



"This school of thought regards shared origin, language, home country, state, culture and fate as the factors creating the nation (...) the main point being that it sees the very essence of the nation in such external, material traits".<sup>782</sup>

He dismisses their validity thus:

"blood descent and race belong to the world of nature, whereas nationality belongs to the world of the intellect".<sup>783</sup>

Similarly language is not a valid argument:

"The same difficulties are encountered in the relationship between language and nation. There can be no doubt as to the great power possessed by a shared language in forming and holding together a community. It would be sheer foolishness to deny this. However the power is based on the simple, practical fact that to create and maintain a community the individuals concerned must understand each other. The nation, however, is brought into being by *that, which takes shape in the course of mutual understanding*: the shared mentality. This is conveyed by more than the language alone. Is nationality not also expressed by the international language of art? Language is doubtlessly *one of the manifestations* of the national essence as well. But *this* is the relationship, not the reverse. A language only becomes a national language when the national community has already become established and selects that very language as its vehicle of expression (...) Until the connection between national community and language emerges in the course of development the language is simply an instrument of communication with no national value whatsoever".<sup>784</sup>

Nor is the state vested with the magical power often attributed to language:

"Only by deploying the most exaggerated rationalism could someone contend that nationality (*állampolgárság*) could automatically make anyone at all into a member of the nation or its loss exclude him from his nation. There are times when the great exiled are the most faithful to their nation and truly the most representative of their national community. The state is an external, institutional formation, based on laws, commands and violence; the nation is an entirely emotional community, belonging to it and loyalty towards it are not manifested in the observance of external rules and its existence does not depend on whether it has sovereignty in the legal sense at its

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<sup>782</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

<sup>783</sup> *Op. cit.*, p11.

<sup>784</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp11-12. Emphasis in original.

disposal. Nations can also exist without a state (...). If we identify nation and state, we exclude the Hungarians living in Transylvania or America from the ranks of our nation (...). Statehood is not a vital component of a national community".<sup>785</sup>

If indeed state and nation are divorced from one another the national heterogeneity of the population at large becomes a matter of indifference because the state itself is neutral in terms of nationality. The national communities to which its inhabitants belong no longer pose a threat to it, they do not jeopardise its continued existence.<sup>786</sup>

However what we witness is the drive to compel reality to reflect the ideal:

"One of the methods of achieving this is assimilation. It demands of the inhabitants of the country of foreign extraction and tongue that they (...) not only adopt citizenship, but also the language of the nation lending its name to the country and what lurks behind this demand is the assumption that in so doing they will assimilate in spirit as well because the nation resides in its language.

The other solution is that the inhabitants of the country, who are not included in the dominant nation's community of origin and language, are kept outside of it - tolerated to a greater or lesser extent, but whether this is explicitly acknowledged or not, as a foreign minority to be exterminated. They are citizens - though often not even that - but not members of the nation".<sup>787</sup>

Once the Western concept had taken root the voices of the few far-sighted thinkers such as Count István Széchenyi who viewed Hungarianness as devotion to the Hungarian spirit of freedom<sup>788</sup> were drowned out amidst the chorus calling for the

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<sup>785</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp13-14.

<sup>786</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp19-20.

<sup>787</sup> *Op. cit.*, p19.

<sup>788</sup> *Op. cit.*, p147. Count István Széchenyi (1791-1860) played an important role in the modernisation of Hungary, which earned him the epithet of "the truest Hungarian". Offering one year's income from his estates to establish an institution for the promotion of national culture, he was instrumental in the setting up of the Hungarian Academy of the Sciences. In 1822 he introduced horse racing into the country and in 1827 he founded the National Casino in Pest as a venue for exchanges of political views. The Danube Steamship Navigation Company owed a great deal to his enthusiasm and he supervised the regulation of the Danube and the Tisza. The Chain Bridge linking Buda and Pest was also one of the projects he inspired. From 7<sup>th</sup> April to 11<sup>th</sup> September 1848, he was Minister of Transport and Public Works in the Batthyány government. The Viennese ultimatum to the revolutionaries proved too much for him to bear and he was taken to an asylum in Döbling where he remained until his death (*Kontler*, pp231-3 and 252-3).

imposition of Hungarian identity in accordance with the precepts of Western nationalism on understandably recalcitrant national minorities. The demise of the "community of vocation" (*hivatásközösség*)<sup>789</sup> paved the way for the discontents that led directly to Trianon.

Joó's ideas were never able to compete in terms of popularity with those of the irredentists. He attempted a return to source, a restoration of the nomadic (Eastern) values of tolerance and inclusion based on loyalty to the crown (as a unifying symbol) rather than on blood or ethnicity (vocation as opposed to materiality). However, even his view takes the national principle of classification for granted, assuming that the act of adhesion in itself brings about a qualitative transformation.

### 2.3 Hungarianness as Characteristics: Mihály Babits

Also in 1939 Mihály Babits'<sup>790</sup> essay "On the Hungarian Character" was published as part of a collection on the subject of *What is Hungarianness? (Mi a Magyar?)*, edited by the eminent historian Gyula Szekfű.<sup>791</sup> The author begins by stressing the historical, as opposed to the biological definition of Hungarianness, as a phenomenon that evolved over time and is not physical, but spiritual, although it is alive.<sup>792</sup> Hence the need to take account of the forms it assumed in the past.<sup>793</sup>

"Hungarianness, as I know it from life and from books and which I feel within myself as well, is to be frank not vague and even less insubstantial. Its substance is national

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<sup>789</sup> *Op. cit.*, p189.

<sup>790</sup> Mihály Babits (1883-1941) was one of the most eminent members of the *Nyugat* circle. His first volume of poetry was published in 1909.

<sup>791</sup> Magyar Szemle Társaság, Magyar Szemle Könyvei 15, Budapest, 1939. Reprint of the first edition by Helikon Kft., Gyomaendrőd, 1992, referred to in the following as Szekfű. Babits, along with other authors in the volume such as László Ravasz, define their stance on Hungarianness in opposition to Lajos Prohászka's *A vándor és a bujdosó, The Wayfarer and the Exile* from 1936, in which he states inter alia that Hungarians do not comprehend the European mentality because they are lacking in certain qualities. Their Eastern temperament fosters supercilious idleness and Hungarian achievements are not the fruit of rational, expedient activity. In the eyes of the West the Hungarians are somewhat of an exotic curiosity, an anachronism. See: *Helyünk*, p355. On *Mi a Magyar?* and Babits' contribution to it, see Ambrus Miskolczy, *Szellem és nemzet*, Napvilág Kiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp67-144.

<sup>792</sup> *Mi a Magyar?*, pp37-39.

<sup>793</sup> *Op. cit.*, p39.

tradition itself: in other words the aggregate of memories of fate and intellectual and emotional experiences. It appears externally as the Hungarian character and demeanour, which can be empirically observed and indisputably circumscribed in words".<sup>794</sup>

Its thousand faces and the endless changes it undergoes make it hard to pin down and this tantalising impalpability has helped it to elude rigorous analysis.<sup>795</sup> The crisis brought on by the recent trauma of the peace treaty has inspired a wave of investigations into the national character, which fail to convince because they take as their source material ready-made pronouncements on the issue tailored for the consumption of a specific audience rather than sifting through the oeuvres of the poetic greats, which subconsciously betray its contents.<sup>796</sup> Moreover the true focus of the researchers' interest is not the national character itself so much as the national destiny. Therefore any pretension to dispassionate objectivity on their part is precisely that. They involuntarily bend the facts to fit the theory.<sup>797</sup>

For the Hungarian, seeking greater insight into his innermost being is not related to similar endeavours elsewhere in Europe, nor is it a misguided nationalistic gesture intended to separate him from all others:

"He feels too isolated, too lonely as it is. If he searches after his national character he is looking for precisely the spiritual link that joins every Hungarian together, the few people in the world who are Hungarian! And he looks for his place amongst the European nations, not to separate himself from them, but to stand amongst them".<sup>798</sup>

The methodological difficulty of the enquiry is presented by the sources themselves. The biography of the Hungarians, history, and the diary of intellectual events, literature, are saturated with external influences. The exercise is comparable to isolating an element, which only occurs in compounds.<sup>799</sup> Primitiveness is not necessarily synonymous with authenticity or undiluted purity. The simple peasant way of life is remarkably international in terms of the way of thinking it encourages:

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<sup>794</sup> *Op. cit.*, p40.

<sup>795</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 40-41.

<sup>796</sup> *Op. cit.*, p42.

<sup>797</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 42-43.

<sup>798</sup> *Op. cit.*, p46.

<sup>799</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp47 and 49.

variations tend to be restricted to the trappings alone.<sup>800</sup> A final pitfall to avoid is overloading the fragments of information of the medieval chronicles with significance by giving free reign to the imagination and reading too much into given words.<sup>801</sup>

Nevertheless the notion of materiality clearly surfaces:

"A nation's character, like that of an individual, is a unified and organic thing; the substance, which I wish to grasp, is present everywhere and binds everything together".<sup>802</sup>

The world of concepts open to the national soul is moulded by the country, the land, the colours of the climate and the racial temperament. Tradition and culture have welded the countless, disparate racial elements into a single, unified entity and the language has a crucial role to play in the process:

"First of all this language took over the role of the vanished, intermingled ancient race, that of preserving and shaping the intellectual formation we designate as the Hungarians. "The nation resides in its language" according to the old saying and as far as the Hungarians are concerned this is almost literal truth (...). Knowledge of the Hungarian language is certainly still not enough in itself to make someone into a Hungarian. The wire does not make the electric current. The Hungarian language is a medium and a wire in which the living, spiritual current of the Hungarians pulsates onward. This current has its point of departure in the depths of the race and was induced there, but it is the language that picked it up and transmitted it further. In performing this service culture, literature and art attach themselves to language, representing a kind of extension and polyphonic amplification of the language".<sup>803</sup>

Given that a thousand years have elapsed since the arrival of the Hungarian settlers, Babits is sceptical towards theories emphasising the Eastern aspects of Hungarianness:

"We are a people of our local surroundings, it is here that we blended into a nation from the types that congregated in this place. Our way of life also developed into what it is now. Our imagination, our emotional universe and our entire culture were woven from the landscapes, colours produced by the climate to be found here and

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<sup>800</sup> *Op. cit.*, p49.

<sup>801</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp49-50.

<sup>802</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp50-51.

<sup>803</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp51-52 and 53-54.

from the impressions and moods they created. Not only does this land keep watch over the memories of our life and history, but from our earliest childhood we too inseparably carry within ourselves thousands of different memories of this land. We ourselves are this memory. If a profound correlation and spiritual connection exists between people and country then it certainly exists between our people and our country! Of course I am referring to the thousand-year-old country, the land wreathed by the mountains in a semi circle...Every part of it participated in the relationship; random political events do not count here. This beautiful, rounded territory is the bed in which it was born, the mattress on which it can stretch out in comfort; it is the vessel in which this Hungarian blood was mixed and the palette for the colours of our culture".<sup>804</sup>

The rich variety of landscapes within a single geographical unit left their mark on the Hungarian soul, although inferences about the Hungarian character cannot be made from the environment alone,<sup>805</sup> as the vicissitudes of history must be added to the equation. Hungary's location at the frontier between East and West meant that it acted as a crossroads, a point of impact between cultures. Under such circumstances any nation would have been forced to count a fierce martial spirit amongst its characteristics. Fighting could simply not be avoided.<sup>806</sup> In the face of constant change, unwillingness to show wonder or surprise became engrained in Hungarian behaviour, though this did not preclude a weakness for splendour and displays of grandeur noted in the earliest records. This should not be confused with world-weariness.<sup>807</sup>

Hungarians do not brood excessively, they do not wallow in any single emotion or feel bitterness without due cause:

'This sober and matter-of-fact self-assurance signifies a realism of outlook. First and foremost it is a contemplative rather than a practical realism (...). It is the realism of seeing. The behaviour of a people that has learned to watch continuously the thousand different influences and impressions flowing over it fully aware that it is powerless against them just as it is powerless against the weather. The Hungarian is

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<sup>804</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp54-55.

<sup>805</sup> *Op. cit.*, p57.

<sup>806</sup> *Op. cit.*, p57.

<sup>807</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp59-60.

the man who lazily stands at the gate looking around as he smokes his pipe, keeping an eye on the clouds. Seeing is self-assured, pure, calm and there is no darkness in it, no mysticism or metaphysics, but all the more colour and reality".<sup>808</sup>

The Hungarian's natural detachment, his reluctance to get carried away in the heat of the moment ideally suits him to the political and diplomatic careers. Without this ability to weigh up the significance of events the nation would have died out long ago. To dub the Hungarians a warrior or a political nation is to overlook the dignified wisdom they show in knowing when to refrain from action. Prudent caution is as much a part of Hungarianness as manful demonstrations of prowess. This apparent lethargy is perhaps the sole remaining trace of the Hungarians' origins in the East and it is precisely this characteristic, contemplative disregard, unconsciously sceptical shrewdness, which distinguishes the Hungarians from all their neighbours.<sup>809</sup>

From this passive contentment with his allotted portion flows the Hungarian's acumen in and passionate attachment to the law, representing a search for permanence, for durability in human dealings:

"Firstly the permanence of his country. This "territory of the sacred crown", unified and unchangeable for a thousand years. Other nations may either add to or lose their possessions. Hungary is like a living body, which cannot be hacked at or extended. History bears witness to the fact that every expansion or act of conquest has quickly withered on the vine and conversely its severed parts have sooner or later knitted back together, but whilst this had still not yet happened the Hungarian has always been able to look upon this unified and complete piece of land as his own and no other. This thousand-year-old legal state of affairs is a greater and truer reality in his eyes than the changing situations created by the chance operations of politics.

The same ideal permanence is attached to the constitution, the moral territory and holdings of the Hungarians as it were. Once again it provides a fixed point of reference in the cosmos. The constitution can be breached a thousand times over,

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<sup>808</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp61-62. In this passage, Babits is contesting Prohászka's condemnation of what the latter called "finitism". Prohászka described this character flaw as follows: "[finitism is a trait, which] steers clear of everything, which is problematic, insoluble and induces suspense, but which is resolutely drawn towards the narrow, the safe, the permanent and is only translated into deeds when it may manifest its own existence in a clearly delineated fashion, be entrenching itself behind defined lines" (*op.cit.*, p121).

<sup>809</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp63-65.

governments can ignore it or deliberately violate it. Even if this is true for hundreds of years at a stretch the true Hungarian will continue to consider the constitution alive and in force. He insists on the "fiction of constitutional law". In the same way as Hungarian families, clans and certain individuals incessantly cling to their rights and privileges".<sup>810</sup>

It is the principle that counts and the validity of laws does not depend on whether they can be enforced by applying penalties or on whether anyone else recognises them as applicable. Defending legal permanence is Hungary's true vocation, rather than defending European culture against the barbaric incursions of the East, an honour to which other nations can lay claim,<sup>811</sup> even if it is a house built on the shifting sands of self-delusion. Hungarian "rebelliousness" stemmed merely from the desire to protect what was his and it would therefore be misleading to cast it as a peculiar characteristic.<sup>812</sup> Revolt for the Hungarian is more opposition than action, passive resistance the archetypically Hungarian way of life and his forbearance is not subservience. What finally prods him out of his inertia is being molested, having his tranquillity transgressed and thereby his freedom impinged on.<sup>813</sup>

Jealously guarding his own, the Hungarian is nevertheless not intellectually blinkered and parochial:

"...the Hungarian people is open-minded as well as open-eyed. For nine hundred years its culture has been progressing together with that of Europe. Its openness springs from deep causes drawn from history and life. Even our race is an open one and has embraced the foreign into its bosom with hospitality for a millennium. Our language has been able to absorb the most disparate elements without having lost its fundamental character (...). We accept intellectual experiences with the same openness. One of the glories of our literature is the abundance and high quality of literary translations. We are perfectly entitled to maintain that the receptiveness of our intellectual culture does not lag behind that of the German for example".<sup>814</sup>

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<sup>810</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp69 and 70.

<sup>811</sup> That the Romanians vied for the title of „bulwark of Christendom” is demonstrated by Mitu (*op.cit.*, pp195-8).

<sup>812</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp71-72.

<sup>813</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp76-77.

<sup>814</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp73-74.



Once goaded into defensive action, the Hungarian looks back on his immobility with bitter regret, the stuff of which his national literature, suffused with tragedy, is made. The moral reprehensibility of missed opportunities. Hence Hungarian rhetoric exudes the seriousness of the voice of conscience rather than the exuberance of intellectual fireworks display or the pathos of outpourings of sentiment. It would be wrong to describe the Hungarians as moralising or fond of oratory, however, because their true being is contemplative. They feel it is their duty to aspire to the former qualities. Indeed all the fertile contradictions of the Hungarian character lend it vitality. Even its pessimism is not a slough of despondency, but a source of renewed vigour.<sup>815</sup> According to Babits, the nation is bound together by shared characteristics, a common inheritance founded on historical experience, geographical situation and local landscape. Although not conceived as biological, its materiality is not questioned.

## 2.4 Hungarianness as Essence

Hungarianness as essence, as soul, is a unifying spiritual force expressed through culture, characteristics and language, prior to them, yet dependent on them for survival. They are its very lifeblood. Any restriction or attack on these is therefore tantamount to an assault on the innermost self and the cohesion of the community. The relationship between essence and its mediations is both intimate and mutually reinforcing:

"Language therefore outwardly separates one nation from another, whilst inwardly it is one of the most fundamental factors constructing the nation. It is not a subsidiary matter, but a reality deeply rooted in the body and soul of the nation, part of its organism to which its existence, its life is linked. It is far more than a mere vehicle of thoughts. Every peculiar characteristic, thought process, perception, emotional experience, nerve fabric of the national soul and the workings of its imagination are expressed in language: it is the most personal repository, preserver and container of its character. Take away the nation's language and it ceases to be what it was; it fades away, amalgamates and expires in the sea of surrounding nations".<sup>816</sup>

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<sup>815</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp79, 80 and 83.

<sup>816</sup> Vilmos Tolnai, *The Immortal Hungarian Language* in: *Vérző Magyarország. Magyar Írók Magyarorszáig területéért*. Edited by Dezső Kosztolányi, Helios Nyomda, Budapest, 1928, p55.

Such musings on the true nature of Hungarianness had a wider significance beyond their value as intellectual explorations or exonerative statements regardless of whether this was consciously intended by their authors or not. Any pronouncement on the subject was politically charged in a context where identity had been wielded as a criterion in the redrawing of frontiers. Self-determination had been the principle justifying the excision of two thirds of Hungary from the heartland yet its application had glaring deficiencies:

"...the case of Greater Romania. Of the increase in population brought about by the national principle, of the 5.8 million only 2.8 million, or 53% are Romanian, 47% non-Romanian, of which 1.7 million are Hungarians and 560 thousand Germans, together making a total of 2.3 million representatives of nations belonging to the Western cultural type"<sup>817</sup>.

Indeed:

"The result of Hungary's dissection has been that *three mixed nationality states have been created in place of one* and this has been achieved in such a way as to make the situation perceptibly far less advantageous. This dissection broke up an existing, tried and tested geographical and economic unit without being able to replace it and seeks to force geographically separated and economically incoherent regions and populations into new units (...).

The self-determination of peoples and the nationality principle were the leading principles of establishing the general peace. If the application of one principle occurs to the detriment of the other or if the other is ignored it can degenerate into the greatest of injustices, however. Those who blindly adhere to the nationality principle ascribe exclusive importance to the language community. Yet it is unjust to decree in advance that this principle is the sole decisive factor under all circumstances and it is unjust to assume in advance that every interested party thinks in the same way and that they are not consulted as to their opinion as a result. In this day and age the economic factors are equally strong as the linguistic ones, if not stronger. Because people feel most firmly attached to their immediate environment: their surroundings, which are formed by a variety of elements, not therefore by language alone, but by

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<sup>817</sup> Count Albert Apponyi, *The Historical Vocation of Hungary and the States Enlarged at its Expense in Justice for Hungary*, Budapest Hírlap press, Budapest, 1928, pp15-16.

traditions, customs, extraction and language, by economic ties and the regular, ordinary course of life. Difference in language alone cannot justify political and economic disruption when nature, the historical community stretching back over a thousand years, the traditions and institutions attached to it and the close ties of economic activity prescribe unity as an imperative. Linguistic differences only make recognising the language and individuality of different national minority communities and guaranteeing their free development into a duty. By no manner of means, however, do they require the dismemberment of regions making up a coherent whole".<sup>818</sup>

Transylvania and the connecting territories<sup>819</sup> yielded the most distressing instance of the imperfections of the principle. In spite of the fact that the Romanians made up the absolute majority demographically when the Treaty of Trianon was ratified:

"The Hungarians were the original inhabitants of Transylvania, the Romanians, however, were later immigrants. Hungarians and Transylvanian Saxons live in the older and more developed repositories of civilisation, the cities, are engaged in industry and trade, have always taken an active part in the effervescent life of Western civilisation and have always played a leading role in Transylvania. It is impossible for the Hungarians and Saxons to renounce the higher level they have attained over centuries of exertion and melt into a commonwealth with a far lower Eastern civilisation and Balkan morals<sup>820</sup> and which is not capable of governing elements from a more advanced civilisation and of guaranteeing them a national life of their own. The Hungarians and Saxons are in possession of all the intellectual and material weapons, which assure any race predominance and they can therefore only be stripped of their leading role by means of persecution and brutal violence, which the new overlords, the Romanians from the Regat<sup>821</sup> practice in abundance.

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<sup>818</sup> Op. cit., in the essay by György Lukács, *The Injustices of the Treaty of Trianon*, pp122-123.

<sup>819</sup> Comprising part of *Ugocsa* (north east of *Szatmár*), *Szatmár/Satu Mare*, *Szilágy/Sălaj*, *Bihar/Bihor*, *Arad*, *Krassó-Szöreny/Caraş-Severin*, *Temes/Timiş* and a small section of *Torontál* (to the west of *Temes/Timiş*) counties and southern *Máramaros/Maramureş*. In all later passages I refer to these as Transylvania, in line with current colloquial usage, which considers them a political unit. See *Hetven év. A romániai magyarság története, 1919-1989* edited by László Diószegi and Andrea R. Süle, Budapest, 1990, p5

<sup>820</sup> On the „Balkan spirit” in Romanian self-perception, see *Mitu*, pp82-4.

<sup>821</sup> The Kingdom of Romania.

Everything in Transylvania which means civilisation, progress, improvement and effort is the work of the Hungarian and Saxon minorities. The superiority of the Hungarians and Saxons is neither the result of artificial support from the Hungarian state, nor of oppression of the Romanians nor of brute force used against them. All such speculations completely deny the fact that Transylvania lived a separate national life for three hundred years so that the Hungarians of Transylvania could not have been in a position to draw benefit from the numerical superiority of Hungarians in Hungary and they thus have only themselves to thank for the position they occupy in the life of Transylvania.

The inferiority of Transylvanian Romanians in relation to the Hungarians and Saxons is not the consequence of oppression. The Romanian people are a young nation without traditions and which only attained self-awareness towards the end of the last century. It adopted its religion from Byzantium, the language of its observance was Slavic and the Romanian church obtained independence only in Transylvania with the support of the Protestant princes.<sup>822</sup> Its national literature is also new (...).<sup>823</sup> The Romanian people - far removed from the ebb and flow of historical events - lived the quiet life of shepherds and serfs. The Hungarians by contrast meshed into Western civilisation at an early stage and for ten centuries was a participant in all European events from the crusades through the Reformation to today's date. The backwardness of the Romanians in terms of civilisation and economy can therefore not come as a

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<sup>822</sup> Lukács is referring to István Báthori's reign from 1571-1586. In 1572 he agreed to the Romanian Orthodox Church establishing a metropolitan at *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia*. In 1574 he had the Diet at *Torda/Turda* recognise the right of the Orthodox community to elect bishops, the first of whom, Ghenadie assumed office the same year. See Béla Köpeczi (editor), *Erdély Története*, Volume One, Budapest, 1986, pp497-8 and Georges Castellán, *A History of the Romanians*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1989 (henceforth *Castellán*), p100.

<sup>823</sup> In 1544 the first book in Romanian, a catechism was published in *Nagyszeben/Sibiu* by Filip Moldoveanu. In 1582, Șerban Coresi published the *Szászváros/Orăștie* Bible. Between 1520 and 1600, 364 books were printed by Transylvanian presses. Of these 178 were in Latin, 131 in Hungarian, 23 in Old Slavonic and 10 in Romanian (*Castellán*, pp100-1). On the development of Romanian language literature in Transylvania, see also Constantin C. Giurescu, *Transylvania in the History of Romania*, The Garnstone Press, London, undated, pp101-8. Prior to 1637 all books printed in Romanian were from Transylvania (*idem*, p106). On the relative lateness of Romanian literature, Oțetea writes: "Modern Romanian literature began in the latter half of the eighteenth century and was the product and the expression of the Age of Enlightenment" (*op.cit.*, p470).

surprise to anyone<sup>824</sup> and it is only natural that within a shared state alongside other, more cultured peoples they would not be capable of reaching the same level as the latter for a long time".<sup>825</sup>

The best solution according to the irredentists would be complete restoration of the connecting territories and political and regional autonomy for historical Transylvania within the framework of the Hungarian state.<sup>826</sup>

The superiority argument was one of the mainstays of the Hungarian title-deed claim to Transylvania. Whereas the Hungarian state had come into being with the coronation of Saint István in 1000, Romania's independence from Ottoman rule came only in 1878 (in accordance with the Treaty of San Stefano, the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia having been united in 1859).<sup>827</sup>

In Transylvania, the Romanians had not been included amongst the privileged "nations" of the *Unio trium nationum* (the Hungarians, Székelys and Saxons) in 1437, which formed the basis of constitutional organisation in force until 1848, thereby excluding them from political influence.<sup>828</sup> The "Leopold Diploma" of 4<sup>th</sup> December

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<sup>824</sup> Sorin Mitu convincingly demonstrates that this view had been taken up by the Romanians themselves: „The most frequent negative theme accompanying almost any description of current realities is that of the Romanians' cultural backwardness. It governs the whole cultural discourse growing in the wake of the Transylvanian School [for which see below], by means of the leitmotif of the 'darkness' and ignorance in which Romanians struggle. It is, nevertheless, more than a mere particular, that is, Romanian instance of some of the universal obsessions of the Enlightenment. The lack of modern culture is considered, in the Romanian case, to be a defining feature, a characteristic, which tells the Romanians apart from other peoples because they are not simply backward, they are the most backward of all, both among neighbouring nations and in the whole of Europe" (*Mitu*, p67. For illustrative quotations, see *idem*, pp67, 68 and 69). Mitu continues: „In fact, the very concept of cultural backwardness makes no sense outside the terms of a comparison. Consequently, the worst part was not that the Romanians were simply backward, but that they appeared more backward than others, particularly as compared with their political and national adversaries who were thus entitled to justify their own domination" (*Mitu*, p71).

<sup>825</sup> Lukács in *Justice*, pp133-134.

<sup>826</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp140 and 141.

<sup>827</sup> Ioan Aurel Pop, *Romanians and Romania: A Brief History*, Columbia University Press, 1999, pp105-126 and *Castellan*, p139.

<sup>828</sup> Lukács in *Justice*, p135 and *Ofetea*, p189. See also *Castellan*, pp47-8 and Zsolt Trócsányi, *Három nép, három nemzet, négy vallás*, in *Erdély a Históriaiban*, edited by Nándor Bárdi, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998 (henceforth *Bárdi*), pp87-93.

1691 confirmed the position of the three “nations” (with public office reserved exclusively for them) and the Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran and Unitarian denominations.<sup>829</sup> Two later imperial charters (16<sup>th</sup> February 1699 and 30<sup>th</sup> March 1701) gave acknowledgement to the Greek Catholic Church (which had recognised the authority of Rome in October 1698), the latter regulating the legal status of its clergy.<sup>830</sup>

The pioneer of the struggle for political rights on the part of the Romanians in Transylvania was Greek Catholic Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein (1692-1768). Over a fifteen year period he sent a constant stream of memoranda and requests to the Diet and the imperial court in Vienna to bring about the application of the 1701 charter, which had remained a dead letter. His case for the granting of equal rights to the Romanian “nation” was based on its numerical superiority over all other peoples in Transylvania, the greater burden of obligations it had to bear in comparison with the privileged “nations”, its antiquity and its continuous residence since the days of Emperor Trajan.<sup>831</sup>

The latter statement appears again in the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, a petition sent to Emperor Leopold II in March 1791 by historian Samuil Micu, Ion Budai-Deleanu, Petru Maior and Gheorghe Șincai<sup>832</sup> amongst others calling for full enjoyment of

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<sup>829</sup> *Castellan*, pp103-4. See also D. Prodan, *Supplex Libellus Valachorum*, Publishing House of the Academy of the Socialist Republic of Romania, Bucharest 1971 (henceforth *Prodan*), pp62-3. See also *Oțetea*, pp251-2.

<sup>830</sup> *Castellan*, p105; *Prodan*, pp113-33 and *Oțetea*, pp252-3.

<sup>831</sup> Cf. *Castellan*, p107; *Prodan*, pp134-187 and *Oțetea*, pp275-7. For Micu-Klein’s successors, see *Prodan*, pp195-228.

<sup>832</sup> These writers formed the Transylvanian School. Micu (1745-1806) was Inochentie’s grandson. His most important works were a grammar of the Romanian language, completed by Șincai and published in Latin in Vienna under the title *Elementa linguae daco-romanae sive valachiae* and *Istoria și lucrurile și întâmplările Românilor* (*The History, Affairs and Events of the Romanians*) passages from which were published as an appendix to the Buda Calendars for 1806 and 1807. Șincai (1753 or 1754-1816) spent 34 years writing a *Hronica Românilor și mai multor neamuri* (*Chronicle of the Romanians and Other Peoples*), part of which featured as an appendix to the Buda Calendars of 1808 and 1809 (the complete version only appearing in print in 1853). Petru Maior (1760-1821) was outspoken in disputing the allegations of earlier historians concerning the Romanians. His main work, *Istoria pentru începuturile Românilor în Dacia* (*The History of the Beginnings of the Romanians in Dacia*), was published in 1812 (Giurescu, *Transylvania in the History of Romania*, pp108-110 and for the later output of the Transylvanian School, pp110-116). Budai-Deleanu (1760-1820) was most famous for his

rights in place of mere toleration, equality with the other “nations”, identical entitlement to benefits for members of the clergy, nobility and commoners in both town and countryside, proportional appointment of Romanians to the various institutions of government and administration and use of Romanian designations for the counties, districts and urban communities where they outnumber the other “nations”.<sup>833</sup> The text reads as follows: “The Romanian nation is by far the oldest of all the nations of the Transylvania of today, as it is common knowledge and has been proved by historical evidence and by a tradition never interrupted, by the resemblance between the languages, the customs and habits, that they descend from the Roman colonies repeatedly brought here in Dacia at the beginning of the second century by the Emperor Trajan, with a very large number of veterans, to protect the province. The descendants of Emperor Trajan were the masters of Dacia for several centuries. Under their uninterrupted rule, the Christian faith, the rite of the Eastern Church, spread to these parts due to the endeavours of bishops Protogenes, Gaudentius, Nicetas and Theotinus, especially in the fourth century, as shown by the whole history of the Church”.<sup>834</sup>

Although rejected by the Diet, it is regarded as the first major articulation of Romanian national consciousness.<sup>835</sup>

In his speech to the Royal Foreign Affairs Society in 1933, István Bethlen, Prime Minister of Hungary from 14<sup>th</sup> August 1921 to 24<sup>th</sup> August 1931,<sup>836</sup> reiterated many of the points raised above, fleshing them out with statistics: “In 1910 the total population of the 29 towns of Transylvania comprised 350,268. Of these, 205,728

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comic epic, the *Țiganiada*. See Zoltán I. Tóth, *Az erdélyi román nacionalizmus első százada, 1697-1792*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998 (originally published by the Teleki Pál Tudományos Intézet, Budapest, 1946), p323.

<sup>833</sup> *Prodan*, pp464-5 (and for a detailed analysis of its contents, pp10-20). On the *Supplex*, see also *Castellan*, pp111-2; *Oțetea*, pp280-1 and Zoltán I. Tóth, *op.cit.*, pp325-339.

<sup>834</sup> *Prodan*, p455.

<sup>835</sup> *Castellan*, p112. On the petition’s fate, see *Prodan*, pp21-61.

<sup>836</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1932, Bethlen had accepted the offer to become honorary President of the *Magyar Revíziós Liga* (Hungarian Revisionist League). See *Trianon*, pp423-4. It had been founded in the wake of the Rothermere campaign (on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1927, Lord Rothermere published an article, *Hungary’s Place in the Sun*, in the Daily Mail. In it he maintained that peace in Central and Eastern Europe could not be guaranteed in the long run unless the Trianon frontiers were modified). See *Romsics 2000*, pp236-7.

(58.7%) were Hungarian, 56,347 (16.1%) Saxon and only 81,939 (23.4%) Romanian. However the Romanian inhabitants of the towns were not or were only in very small part members of the middle-classes, made up instead of workers who had immigrated and of domestic servants.

This is also thrown into high relief by the statistics concerning the professions engaged in by the populations, since in Transylvania in 1910 of those employed in industry and artisanal activity 172,270 (52.5%) were Hungarian, 52,108 (15.9%) German and 88,808 (27.1%) Romanian; in commerce (including the credit branch) 35,533 (59.8%) were Hungarian, 13,285 (22.3%) German and 9,520 (16%) Romanian".<sup>837</sup>

As far as "cultural advancement" was concerned, Bethlen again sought to create the impression of objectivity by quoting numbers: "In 1910 the proportion of the population over the age of six able to read and write was:

410,439 (27.9%) of the Romanians

550,111 (59.9%) of the Hungarians

117,580 (75.9%) of the Saxons".<sup>838</sup>

In order to prove that the high illiteracy rate amongst Romanians was not due to a lack of teaching facilities in their mother tongue, Bethlen was keen to emphasise that of the 2663 primary schools in Transylvania, 1145 (43%) had Romanian as the language of instruction.<sup>839</sup>

In spite of acknowledging the prodigious growth of the Romanian population in Transylvania, he attributed it to large-scale immigration to escape the hardships of life under the Ottoman yoke. He writes for example: "It is true that the Romanian people in Transylvania in the space of one century from 1700 to 1811 increased in number from 200,000 by almost 400% to 950,000, but this was as a result of immigration. In

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<sup>837</sup> The speech is reprinted in *Bethlen István válogatott politikai írások és beszédek*, Osiris, Budapest, 2000. The quotation is to be found on p295. Cf. Zoltán Szász, *op.cit.*, p125. At that time the population of Transylvania, the Banat, *Máramaros/Maramureș* and the *Körös/Cris* river region totalled 5,265,444, of which 53.2% spoke Romanian, 32.4% Hungarian and 10.6% German. According to Szász, 17.9% of urban dwellers were Romanian. Whilst 86.3% of the Romanians worked the land, 8% laboured in industry and 1.4% belonged to the intelligentsia (mostly clergy). Cf. also *Kolar*, p106.

<sup>838</sup> Bethlen, *op.cit.*, p296.



the following century, however, from 1811 to 1910 the increase was only from 950,000 to 1,470,000, in other words a mere 50 and a few percent because by then they were dependent on their own natural reproduction".<sup>840</sup> In common with his contemporaries (and Hungarian nationalists ever after) he fails to make the connection between the sheer weight of numbers of the Romanians (greatly exceeding that of the Hungarians) and the rightfulness of their claim. What counts is priority and historic rights: although the population balance had been upset by the constant influx of Romanians from the Regat, the Hungarians had been there first and thus their claim to Transylvania was morally vindicated.

The fate of the Hungarians of Transylvania, the largest of the minorities, became emblematic of the sufferings imposed on Hungarians everywhere. Aggrieved nationalists followed developments with ceaseless vigilance, storing up ammunition for condemnations of Romanian policy in the hope that the victorious powers would eventually acknowledge the error of their ways.

The interpretation of history, the concepts of nationhood and musings on the Hungarian essence formed the intellectual heritage of the Transylvanian Hungarians.<sup>841</sup> Their self-image had been steeped in the doxa and although it had lost its self-evident quality (becoming orthodoxy), the nationalist principle of classification still held sway. The Hungarians of Transylvania continued to consider themselves materially different (as did the Romanians) and any representation or reappraisal of who they were can only be fully understood against the backdrop of Hungarianness.

## 2.5 Transylvanianness

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<sup>839</sup> As above. Bethlen makes no attempt at analysis of the data, which might, for example, take account of social factors, such as the occupational background of the children's families, preferring a racial explanation.

<sup>840</sup> Bethlen, *op.cit.*, pp305-6.

<sup>841</sup> Although the Transylvanianist deliberations pre-date the Hungarian debates examined above, the contents of the latter make the older, previously hidden assumptions about Hungarianness shared by the Transylvanians explicit and as such form the screen upon which the separate Transylvanian identity was projected.

Under the Károlyi administration,<sup>842</sup> Oszkár Jászi<sup>843</sup> was appointed Minister of Nationality Affairs. On 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> November 1918, he met the leaders of the Central Romanian National Council<sup>844</sup> in *Arad* offering concessions to autonomy along the lines of the Swiss cantonal system in the hope of averting the loss of Transylvania to Romania.<sup>845</sup> His conciliatory efforts were in vain. Hungary's prospects of keeping Transylvania were diminished further by the proclamation of secession on the part of the Romanians on 20<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>846</sup> In the meantime, Romanian troops were drawing steadily nearer. On November 13<sup>th</sup>, Károlyi had signed a military convention with General Franchet d'Esperey, commander of the French forces in the Balkans who did not accept the terms of the armistice of Padova.<sup>847</sup> The Belgrade Convention established a demarcation line along the course of the river *Maros/Mureş*, thereby splitting Transylvania in two.<sup>848</sup> Franchet gave the official go-ahead to advance as far as the demarcation line on 17<sup>th</sup> November.<sup>849</sup>

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<sup>842</sup> Assuming power in the wake of the Aster Revolution, for which see footnote 392, p95 above.

<sup>843</sup> On Jászi (1875-1957), see Lee Congdon, *The Moralist as Social Thinker: Oszkár Jászi in Hungary, 1900-1919*, in Laqueur and Mosse, *op.cit.*, pp273-313.

<sup>844</sup> The Council had originally been formed in Budapest with six representatives of the Romanian National Party and an equal number of Social Democrats at the end of October, moving to Transylvania shortly afterwards. See p277 of Constantin C. Giurescu, *Greater Romania, 1918 in Romania A Historic Perspective*, edited by Dinu C. Giurescu and Stephen Fischer-Galați, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998 (henceforth *Giurescu 1998*), pp275-292. It organised local Romanian councils, whose members ousted Hungarian officials, taking over power. See Ernő Raffay, *Erdély 1918-1919-ben*, Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, 1987 (henceforth *Raffay*), pp82-3.

<sup>845</sup> Zoltán Szász, *Gyulafehérvár, Alba Iulia, 1918: Transylvania's Union with Romania*, pp125-135 in *Hungarians and Their Neighbours in Modern Times, 1867-1950*, edited by Ferenc Glatz, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995 (henceforth *Glatz*), pp132-3. See also *Romsics 2000*, p113; *Kontler*, pp329-30 and for a detailed discussion of the negotiations *Raffay*, pp86-114.

<sup>846</sup> *Raffay*, pp127-9; *Kontler*, p330 and Zoltán Szász, *op.cit.*, p134.

<sup>847</sup> *Romsics 2000*, p113; *Kontler*, p330 and *Raffay*, pp84-5 and 103-4 The Padova armistice dated from 3rd November (*Romsics 2000*, p112).

<sup>848</sup> As above. Zoltán Szász, *op.cit.*, adds that Iuliu Maniu, the most prominent of the Transylvanian Romanian politicians at the time sent a memorandum to Paris during the *Arad* talks requesting permission for the Romanian army to cross the demarcation line (which he also wanted moved north) on the pretext that the Hungarians had committed atrocities (p133). On the latter issue, cf. *Raffay*, p107.

<sup>849</sup> *Raffay*, p141. On troop movements, see *idem*, pp133-9 and 146. As Romsics points out, the demarcation line had not been respected as it was (*Romsics 2000*, p115).

Against this backdrop, a flurry of preparations was held for an assembly at *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia*,<sup>850</sup> at which the famous decisions were adopted on 1<sup>st</sup> December. In front of a crowd approximately 100,000 strong, the 1228 official delegates called for union with Romania for the territories in and around Transylvania inhabited by Romanians.<sup>851</sup> Provisional autonomy would be granted until the election of the national assembly, which would be followed by a constitutional assembly empowered to take a definitive decision. The following principles would hold sway in the new Romanian state and were actually enacted as a decree: complete national freedom for all the peoples living within its boundaries. Every national group would be entitled to govern itself and provide education in its own mother tongue with its own public administration and judiciary whose members would be elected from its own ranks. Representation in the legislative bodies and national government would be in proportion to the size of the population concerned. All ecclesiastical denominations would be placed on an equal footing and enjoy autonomy. Democracy would be the order of the day in all areas of public life with universal direct suffrage for voters over the age of 21 in local, county and parliamentary elections with secret ballot, again respecting proportionality. Complete freedom of the press, assembly and association would obtain. Land reform would ensure more equitable access to resources and promote social equality by abolishing the entailed estates, reducing the size of the latifundia and establishing holdings that could viably be run by a family and industrial workers would be guaranteed the same rights as their counterparts in the most advanced countries of the West. A national council would be set up to represent all the Romanians of Hungary, Transylvania and the connecting territories.<sup>852</sup>

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<sup>850</sup> *Raffay*, pp155-8.

<sup>851</sup> *Raffay*, p158 and Constantin C. Giurescu, *op.cit.*, p277.

<sup>852</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp27-28. For a fuller version of the text see also *Mikó*, pp265-267. The significance of the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions is explored in *Raffay*, pp158-167; *Erdély rövid története*, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993, pp568-570, edited by Béla Köpeczi and Gábor Barta; Zoltán Szász, *op.cit.*; Constantin C. Giurescu, *op.cit.*, pp277-8 and Andrei Oțetea, *The History of the Romanian People*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1970 (henceforth *Oțetea*), pp460-462. The Romanian National Council acted as a parliament, setting up the *Consiliul Dirigent* to carry out the practical work of government. These initiatives could have been a blueprint for autonomous government for the Hungarians as shown by the deliberations below. Representatives of the Hungarian and Saxon populations were neither invited to take part in the assembly, nor were they consulted about the decisions taken.

As of 2<sup>nd</sup> December, the demarcation line ceased to have any real meaning as the Romanian army set about annexing the territories listed in the Treaty of Bucharest of 17<sup>th</sup> August 1916.<sup>853</sup> By Christmas Eve, it had reached *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*, which it subsequently occupied.<sup>854</sup>

With the arrest of chief commissioner István Apáthy in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1919 on the pretext of agitating for Bolshevism, the Hungarian administration in Transylvania ground to a halt.<sup>855</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> January, a decree was passed obliging civil servants to swear an oath of loyalty to the Romanian state. Many Hungarians refused, citing the Belgrade Convention and lost their posts with immediate effect. Deprived both of severance pay and a pension, they were plunged into penury.<sup>856</sup>

During the same month, the flow of information between Transylvania and Budapest was deliberately cut off by the Romanians with the banning of all but local telephone calls and the censorship of Hungarian-language newspapers.<sup>857</sup> On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January a general strike was held by way of protest against the occupation. It was quickly suppressed.<sup>858</sup>

<sup>853</sup> *Romsics 2000*, p113. Had the Treaty been honoured in full, Romania's borders would have extended right up to the Tisza, as far west as Debrecen and including Szeged and Orosháza (Zoltán Szász, *op.cit.*, p129 and Zsuzsa L. Nagy, *The Peace Treaties, 1919-1920*, in *Glatz*, pp91-7, p92). See also *Ofetea*, p444.

<sup>854</sup> On the strategic importance of *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*, see *Raffay*, pp168-9; on the attempt to organize a major assembly of Hungarians in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, see *idem*, pp181-3 and on the occupation, pp186-8.

<sup>855</sup> *Raffay*, pp191-2. For further details on the Romanian takeover of the administration, see *idem*, pp214-225.

<sup>856</sup> See *Mikó*, pp15-17 (for bibliographical details see footnote 401, p98); Béla Pomogáts, *A transzilvanizmus. Az Erdélyi Helikon ideológiája*, pp42-43, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1983; Benedek Jancsó, *A román uralom berendezkedése Erdélyben* in *Magyar Szemle*, October 1928, p127 and Emil Grandpierre in *Az erdélyi magyarság politikai küzdelmei az egységes magyar párt megalakulásáig*, pp 130-132, *Magyar Szemle*, October 1928, Magyar Szemle Társaság, Budapest. Cf. also *Kolar*, pp91-2.

<sup>857</sup> *Raffay*, pp229-231. In *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* postal deliveries had been stopped on Christmas day 1918. The letters arriving from the Hungarian capital by train were sprinkled with petrol and set alight (p232). On the harassment of the civilian population, the committing of atrocities and the setting up of internment camps, see pp234-8.

<sup>858</sup> *Raffay*, pp250-2.

In spite of the turmoil, political activity did not cease altogether. On 24<sup>th</sup> March 1919, Elemér Gyárfás<sup>859</sup> drafted a memorandum to Iuliu Maniu, which he intended to deliver personally. Having arrived in *Nagyszeben/Sibiu*, however, he changed his mind, partly because the prevailing mood convinced him that it was too late for such initiatives: the notion of an independent or an autonomous Transylvania had been overtaken by events. In May, Gyárfás once again felt that his plans might stand a slim chance of acceptance, passing the document on to a colleague who in turn transmitted it to the Romanian authorities. Although nothing ever came of it, Gyárfás consoled himself with the knowledge that his efforts constituted proof that the Hungarians had not shirked the responsibility of approaching the Romanians at a juncture when a glimmer of hope remained that Transylvania's fate had not been definitively sealed.<sup>860</sup> In the accompanying letter, Gyárfás attributes the inaction of the Hungarians to the uncertainties of the political situation: "Until now, the Hungarians of Transylvania have been watching the struggle between *Romanian nationalism* and *Hungarian Bolshevism* with a certain lethargic indifference. They were aware that they could expect nothing much by way of good from either (...) But they also sensed that neither was directly and primarily aimed against them and so with mixed feelings they nurtured the hope that one or the other might prove to be more considerate towards them".<sup>861</sup>

In his view, the sole means of preventing the destruction of Transylvania's cultural and economic assets was to arrive at an equitable peace with the local Hungarians on

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<sup>859</sup> Lawyer, journalist and politician Elemér Gyárfás (1884–1945) became a civil servant in 1910 and in 1917 to 1918 in charge of the administration of *Kisküküllő* county. He was elected to the Romanian Senate as a representative of the Hungarian National Party in 1926.

<sup>860</sup> Elemér Gyárfás, *Erdélyi problémák 1903-1923*, Erdélyi Irodalmi Társaság, Kolozsvár, 1923, pp143-4. Gyárfás does not reveal the identity of his friend, whom he describes simply as "a highly esteemed, elderly Hungarian gentleman" (p143). On the memorandum, see Ignác Romsics, *A független vagy autonóm Erdély terve a magyar és a nemzetközi politikában (1919-1945)*, in Gyöngy Kovács Kiss (editor), *Erdélyről Európában mítosztalanul*, Korunk Baráti Társaság, Komp-Press Kiadó, Kolozsvár, 2003 (henceforth *Kovács Kiss*), pp115-131 and Piroška Balogh, *Transylvaniam: Revision or Regionalism?* in *Romsics 1999*, pp243-262.

<sup>861</sup> Gyárfás, *op.cit.*, p146. Emphasis in original. Béla Kun's Soviet Republic came into existence on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1919, lasting until the 1<sup>st</sup> August when its leaders fled to Vienna (where they were given political asylum) and a Social Democrat government under Gyula Peidl was left to pick up the pieces (Cf. *Kontler*, pp338-9 and *Romsics 2000*, p130).

the basis of the Wilsonian principles and the constitutional system that had evolved in the course of the region's history.<sup>862</sup> Lasting harmony between the Romanian and Hungarian populations could not be achieved if either side were to resign itself to a given government in the belief that it might be transitory. It would be far preferable to agree upon a mutually acceptable solution, which would rouse the enthusiasm of all and which the peoples of Transylvania would not seek to undermine, but on the contrary rigorously defend against all moral or physical attacks from the outside.<sup>863</sup> Gyárfás outlined his vision for an autonomous Transylvania in twelve points, which included the following: in the light of their common interest in law and order, the safety of life and property, freedom of conscience and religion, undisturbed cultural and economic development, genuine liberty and democracy and the future happiness of its "soil sanctified by blood", its three nations, the Hungarians, Romanians and Saxons would conclude a close and indissoluble union and alliance.<sup>864</sup> Both Hungary's territorial integrity and the creation of Greater Romania would be treated as foreign policy issues and, as such forwarded to Transylvania's legal bodies for ultimate resolution, which would have to respect the autonomous rights of its nations in full as well as ensure their institutional protection. A Governing Council, comprising 24 members in total (10 Romanian, 10 Hungarian and four Saxon delegates appointed by each community on a temporary basis) and with its seat in *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* would submit proposals to the Transylvanian National Assembly. The latter would be convened within a fortnight of the formation of the Governing Council so that it would be in a position to meet for the first time within three months at the latest (after elections to be held in the existing constituencies). Apart from the elected deputies, the bishops of the Transylvanian churches and one prominent secular figure from each diocese would be entitled to attend and cast votes at sessions of the Assembly. All of the laws and other provisions in force in Transylvania on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918 would continue to hold sway unchanged with the exception that the rights, functions and authority previously vested in the crown and the Hungarian government would be transferred to the Governing Council until further arrangements were put in place and that the Hungarian coat of arms and other

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<sup>862</sup> Gyárfás, *op.cit.*, p146.

<sup>863</sup> Gyárfás, *op.cit.*, p147.

<sup>864</sup> *Op.cit.*, p149.

emblems would be replaced by their Transylvanian equivalents. Similarly, all civil servants in office on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918 would retain their posts, responsibilities and salaries and the regulations pertaining to their promotions, pensions and so on would remain valid. The Governing Council would approve and confirm en bloc all the appointments made by its Romanian counterpart in *Nagyszeben/Sibiu*. The members of the Governing Council and all new functionaries would be required to swear an oath of loyalty to Transylvania and its constitution, pledging to uphold the union and freedom of the three nations and respect their rights of self-government. The Governing Council would submit proposals to the Assembly concerning the organisation of Transylvania's legislative bodies, the Transylvanian coat of arms, the national colours and the use of symbols by the three nations, the rules of entitlement to vote, agricultural reform, modification of the 1868 law on the equality of national minorities to bring them in line with Transylvanian realities,<sup>865</sup> the harmonisation of county with linguistic boundaries as well as of administrative and judicial districts with electoral constituencies and the amendment of the criminal statute to outlaw the sowing of racial discord between the nations on penalty of high treason. Finally, all those born or holding office in Transylvania prior to 31<sup>st</sup> October 1918, those naturalised by law and the legitimate descendants of the above categories would be regarded as its citizens.<sup>866</sup>

Gyárfás' plan to substitute Hungarian (or Romanian) symbols with their Transylvanian equivalents (which did possess a certain degree of historical resonance)

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<sup>865</sup> In its preamble, the 1868 Law set out the principle of legal equality for all: "Inasmuch as all the citizens of Hungary form a single nation from a political point of view as well as in accordance with the fundamental principles of the Constitution, the indivisible, unified Hungarian nation, of which every citizen of the homeland is an equal member, regardless of which nationality he belongs to" (Imre Mikó, *Nemzetiségi jog és nemzetiségi politika*, Minerva, Kolozsvár, 1944, reprinted by Optimum Kiadó, Budapest, undated, p501. The text of the Law is reproduced in full on pp501-6). As Kontler remarks, this wording denies the political existence and thus the claims to political rights and institutions of the national minorities (nationalities). At the same time, as he goes on to comment, by granting individual rights it was liberal, providing extensive opportunities for the use of the mother tongue in the administration, courts, schools and churches (Kontler, pp282-3). See also László Katus, *József Eötvös and Ferenc Deák: Laws on Nationalities*, in Romsics 1999, pp133-160. For the Parliamentary debate on the Law, see István Schlett (editor), *A nemzetiségi törvényjavaslat országgyűlési vitája 1868*, Természet- és Társadalombarát Fejlesztésért Közalapítvány-Kortárs Kiadó, Budapest, 2002.

<sup>866</sup> Gyárfás, *op.cit.*, pp149-152.

was not overly far-fetched to at least consider building upon. It revealed that he was aware of their role in creating and consolidating a collective identity. The region had been regarded as a distinct geographical unit in the past with its own traditions and culture and a resumption of autonomy could have allowed the Hungarians, Saxons and Romanians to make a fresh start with full respect for each other's differences. Delegates at the Paris Peace Conference looked upon the declaration of a Soviet Republic in Hungary (21<sup>st</sup> March 1919) with unease and when the fact-finding mission to Budapest headed by Jan Smuts at the beginning of April did not bear fruit (the talks with Communist leader Béla Kun foundering because Smuts did not possess a mandate to make concessions) a Romanian offensive in the East was launched against the Hungarian Soviet Republic, reinforced shortly afterwards by a Czechoslovak invasion from the north. By the beginning of May the Romanians were in control of the provinces east of the River Tisza. The initial successes of the Hungarian Red Army in recapturing territories in the north were undermined by an ultimatum from Paris (June 13<sup>th</sup>) ordering it to withdraw. When Béla Kun complied he not only lost much support amongst the public at large, but many officers also defected to the counter-revolutionary army commanded by Admiral Horthy and stationed in Szeged. The short-lived Gyula Peidl government (1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> August), which marked the end of the Bolshevik experiment witnessed the march of Romanian forces into the Hungarian capital. Although its successor the István Friedrich administration only lasted from August until November it was enthusiastic in its reprisals against former revolutionaries.<sup>867</sup>

In October 1919 the allies dispatched British diplomat Sir George Russell Clerk to Budapest in order to quell the anarchy. His main achievement was to persuade the Romanians to begin pulling out of Hungary, although their place was immediately taken by Horthy's National Army. The Admiral himself triumphally entered Budapest on 16<sup>th</sup> November riding a white horse. Just over a week later, on 24<sup>th</sup> the predominantly conservative Károlyi Huszár cabinet was formed. Clerk recognised it

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<sup>867</sup> For details on the turbulent months in question (covering Kun to Friedrich), see *Romsics 2000*, pp127-133 and *Kontler*, pp337-9. Friedrich, owner of a machine works and erstwhile military under-secretary under Károlyi was not recognised abroad because he owed his position to Archduke Joseph (nominated by Charles IV in 1918 as his representative) who considered himself regent thereby fuelling fears of a Habsburg restoration (*Romsics 2000*, pp131-3 and *Kontler*, p340).



on behalf of the Peace Conference the next day, paving the way for an invitation to participate in its deliberations to be sent (which duly arrived on 1<sup>st</sup> December).<sup>868</sup> The country finally settled down following the Parliamentary elections in January 1920 (25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>) and Horthy's appointment as regent on March 1<sup>st</sup>. The Hungarian peace delegation, with Count Albert Apponyi at its head reached Paris on January 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>869</sup> The Treaty of Trianon was signed on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1920 and ratified on 26<sup>th</sup> July 1921.

During this tumultuous period, the Hungarians of Transylvania<sup>870</sup> remained relatively politically passive,<sup>871</sup> rigorously avoiding any gestures to the Romanian government, which might be interpreted as a concession to the rightfulness of the latter's claims. Once Romania's claim to Transylvania had been definitively endorsed however, further inaction could prove pernicious. This was clearly recognised by the authors of the pamphlet *Kiáltó Szó* (*A Voice Crying in the Wilderness*), Károly Kós,<sup>872</sup> Dr. István Zágoni and Dr. Árpád Paál,<sup>873</sup> the first significant appeal to the Hungarians as a community with a distinct identity and mission. Kós urges the Hungarians to come to terms with the reality of their new situation, however harsh:

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<sup>868</sup> Cf. *Romsics 2000*, pp133-4 and *Kontler*, p340.

<sup>869</sup> *Romsics 2000*, pp134-7 and *Kontler*, pp340-1.

<sup>870</sup> Elsewhere denoted as the Hungarians in keeping with the use of terminology explained in footnote 6 on p8 above.

<sup>871</sup> Apart from the Gyárfás initiative and the attempts to organise an assembly to rival that of *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* mentioned above, the idea of a Székely Republic was also briefly toyed with in November 1918. On the 28th, an assembly of 5000 Székelys was held in *Marosvásárhely/Tirgu Mureş* to discuss how the country's territorial integrity could be defended. See *Raffay*, pp148-150.

<sup>872</sup> Károly Kós (1883-1977), architect, novelist, politician, publisher and politician was a prominent figure in the cultural life of the Hungarian minority, editing the *Erdélyi Helikon* from 1931. In the autumn of 1941 he was forced to flee from his home in *Sztána/Stana* which was plundered and his manuscripts destroyed to *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*. He resumed his political career as President of the *Magyar Népi Szövetség* [Hungarian Popular Alliance] in *Kolozs/Cluj* county from 1944-6. Following his retirement in 1953 he concentrated on literary writing.

<sup>873</sup> Árpád Paál (1880-1944) was a journalist. In 1918-19 he held the post of sub-prefect in *Udvarhely/Odorhei* county and was later elected to the Romanian Parliament.

"Something was signed somewhere, something was bargained somewhere, something was portioned out somewhere and somewhere an open door was closed so that it would remain that way forever.

(...)

Our old flag has been ripped to shreds, our weapons are defective, our soul is shackled.

But I know: we *must* nevertheless pick ourselves up off the ground.

(...) we were torn from, thrown out of the atelier, which was built with the help of the sweat of our toil in times past.

We were not asked: do we want this?

We, however, have to this very day not been willing to believe that this has really happened, that it could have happened in the first place.

And two years have gone by without our doing any work. But we waited. We waited in hope, with devout faith, for the sun to rise in the West! For two years we dreamed and did not want to see or hear, we did not want to feel and live, we just wanted to believe and trust and dream and wait for miracles, which would awaken us in the future.

Because we had grown accustomed to the old, we loved what we had once created.

We believed that it would be ours in perpetuity, just as we had created it ourselves.

Now, however, everything has transpired. After two years of bitter waiting, of numb dreams we have discovered that everything we believed in, trusted in, hoped for was but a castle in the air. We have found out that the sun does not rise in the place where it sets.

(...)

Former Hungary is no more as far as we are concerned, but Erdély, Ardeal, Siebenbürgen, Transylvania or whatever name is given to it in any language has risen and exists as surely as it did exist when we ourselves believed - *because we wanted to believe* - that it did not and that there was *only* Hungary.

(...)

I am a voice crying in the wilderness: this is what I call out!

(...)

Let us not look for law or unlawfulness, justice or injustice, let us not expect fairness or mercy.

We are not even asking for them.

Let us not enquire after what sort of beggars' alms the Treaty of Trianon - drafted and concluded without us although it concerns us - might have left us.

There is not much point to it.

Our truth is our strength.

What we can obtain through struggle will be our own".<sup>874</sup>

Wallowing in misery over what had been lost could only result in stagnation. What was needed was resolve to embrace the future. Inspiration for the daunting task ahead could be drawn from the knowledge that together the Hungarians made for a solid foundation:

"Two million Hungarians armed with the awareness of their thousand-year history and its lessons, concentrated in a geographically unified territory within the framework of a young, poor country with a heterogeneous population of 13 to 14 million, which has been leading an independent existence for barely half a century, can cause major shifts in balance depending on whether it works together with the country or against it.

The individual who extended his sovereignty to include us always has to reckon with us, the Hungarians of Transylvania. Romania too will have to reckon with us if it wants the accumulations of territory and population to mean an accumulation of strength at the same time rather than an extra burden, a ponderous dead weight.

We should not forget that we are not a simple group of inhabitants broken off from the unified body of Hungarians, but that for a thousand years we have been a separate historical unit with our own, separate Transylvanian consciousness, an independent culture and self-esteem. We have been able to face up to every situation, we have been able to govern and we have been able to get back on our feet after difficult defeats. We are familiar with our strength; we do not overestimate it, but we do not belittle it either: we have put it to the test to determine how much we could bear.

We, two million working, taxpaying citizens, who produce material and cultural assets, represent a splendid boost in strength to Romania. But we, as a non-working, unproductive, malignant, invidious internal adversary of two million represent a terrible bane to Romania.

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<sup>874</sup> *Kiáltó Szó; A Magyarság Útja; A Politikai Aktivitás Rendszere*, by Károly Kós, István Zágoni and Árpád Paál, Lapkiadó és Nyomdai Műintézet Részvénytársaság, Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca, 1921, pp1-4. Reprinted by Kapu Könyvek, Budapest, undated. Emphasis in original.

However, we admit openly and sincerely that we prefer to be loyal rather than rebellious, we prefer to build rather than demolish; we prefer to be open friends rather than secret enemies.

But on condition that within the new circumstances we are accorded the minimum we deem indispensable from the point of view of our national culture, ancient customs, racial consciousness, social sentiment and economic development as a result of the lessons learned from our thousand year past.

(...)

I openly and confidently cry out to the Romania that has been augmented with us:

*We Hungarians, who believe firmly in our Hungarianness and are Hungarian-speakers, are citizens of Romania and we seek national autonomy, in possession of which Greater Romania will have gained trustworthy citizens in us".*<sup>875</sup>

Although Hungarianness is not called into question as such (difference remaining material) what we witness here is a gravitation away from Budapest and emphasis on a peculiarly Transylvanian tradition and outlook, an independent identity based on a thousand years of history. Kós does not draw distinctions between the Hungarians concentrated in the urban centres including substantial numbers of Hungarian-speaking Jews and the Székely of Eastern Transylvania,<sup>876</sup> nor does he attach importance to social background, but stresses the unity of the Hungarian community within the revised frontiers. He is keen to dispel any suspicions concerning the loyalty of the Hungarians to their new state, but adamant that it comes at the price of respect for difference as evinced in autonomy.

The second contribution to the pamphlet, *The Hungarians' Path (A Magyarság Útja)*, focuses on political passivity, in particular the concept of passive resistance, and why it has outlived its usefulness tactically:

"Because if appalling indifference gains currency it tends to spread like wildfire amongst people and can degenerate into national suicide. Propagating it artificially is an unpardonable, inhumane transgression.

We find ourselves beyond the ratification already and the current situation was created for us without our having been consulted as to our fate. The Treaty of

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<sup>875</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp4-5. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>876</sup> For statistics concerning the proportion of Jews within the Hungarian population see Pomogáts, *A transzilvanizmus*, p37.

Trianon has become Hungarian law. It is a cold fact, which we simply have to take note of and make allowances for the consequences for us (...). There is scarcely a rational individual amongst us who did not reckon with today's state of affairs at least as a possibility. Our ancestral citizenship has been erased, rewritten and replaced by a new one without our having been given the chance to express our will. For two years we have been mustering the strength of mind to accept this because keeping hold of this land, not budging from this soil and developing Hungarian culture here are imperative national duties".<sup>877</sup>

Two examples of passivity, the civil servants' refusal to swear allegiance to Romania and non-participation in the Parliamentary elections, were correct, but the salient point was that of the implicit resistance they afforded. In the political fray it can be an effective weapon provided that it does not entail sacrificing results and is employed as a protest.<sup>878</sup>

Complete social passivity merely plays into the hands of those it is intended to thwart: "Renouncing everything, lulling oneself to sleep and stopping work can represent the most effective assistance that can be given to every anti-Hungarian endeavour".<sup>879</sup>

Even during the state of siege brought about by the military occupation with its severe restrictions on freedom of movement and accusations being flung around schools, churches and the press conducted their business, theatres only closed down if their doors were physically locked and put under guard.<sup>880</sup>

Unfortunately, in spite of the constant avowals to the contrary on the part of the Romanian government, the treatment meted out to the Hungarians in the last couple of years had been diametrically opposed to the letter and spirit of the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions. No efforts were undertaken to carry the latter into effect. It was at this juncture that the pernicious nature of passivity finally became apparent: the Romanian powers that be could do with the decisions as they saw fit, which meant trampling them underfoot with impunity.<sup>881</sup> Healthy self-

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<sup>877</sup> *Kiáltó Szó*, p7.

<sup>878</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp7-8.

<sup>879</sup> *Op. cit.*, p18.

<sup>880</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp18-19.

<sup>881</sup> *Op. cit.*, p29.

criticism would lead to an acknowledgement of the sterility of remaining in denial.

The key to survival was to be found in general education.<sup>882</sup>

Collective Hungarian identity could not be maintained, let alone perpetuated, without proper access to financial and other resources:

“We have to assure the Hungarians of Transylvania opportunities to earn a livelihood, with firm economic ground beneath their feet and the pathway towards developing culturally for their future. Someone might be obsessed with the morbid, fanciful notion that it would be better to hand over the land holdings lock, stock and barrel and all the properties complete with furnishings and equipment that have been gradually developed and relocate the Hungarians en masse to Brazil or to make them migrate to the wilderness of the Nordic tundra. This is quite manic lunacy. But if we do not try our hand at creating safeguards for the conditions needed for us to live out our lives then we can never know whether huge numbers of Hungarians will not be forced to set off on their travels. They would not do this out of madness, however, but out of compulsion. Yet the price of staying put cannot be that of abandoning the Hungarian essence. The peace treaty though does not offer us more than a few sentences, the contents of which set out prospects in very general terms. Practical implementation is above all our task, but we also have to examine and establish whether these prospects as inserted between the peace terms suffice to yield the opportunities to make a living”.<sup>883</sup>

National character (material Hungarianness) would enable the Hungarians to pull through and agree upon a political programme: the Hungarian temperament and upbringing would not permit the Hungarians to shy away from an open attitude. Instead their very nature was prompting them to take their fate into their own hands rather than make do with ascertaining the lie of the land. No decisions concerning them could be taken without them and their self-confidence was such that it left no latitude for deceit, the Székelys in particular being fond of thinking for themselves. The political lifespan of any aspiring leaders who neglected to keep the Hungarians fully informed would be remarkably short. Membership of the contemporary nation was not the exclusive privilege of a few prestigious nobles, but belonged to all as equals not just in the enjoyment of rights, but also in the will to make sacrifices.

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<sup>882</sup> *Op. cit.*, p30.

<sup>883</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp30-31.

There were no doubts as to who formed part of the opposing national camp, but the real enemies were the traitors ready to give ground on the matter of precious rights.<sup>884</sup>

Adopting such an approach would not constitute a radical departure from the familiar:

"Freedom of national organisation is nothing new in this region. This is what Transylvania's past history is built on and the fact that it was able to transform into a historical foundation is by no means the result of a sudden inspiration on the part of some ancient predecessor, but of the necessity of natural cause and effect perceived through experience and of the ethnic distribution".<sup>885</sup>

Such freedoms were not only the foundation of the strong modern state, but permeated the passages in the peace treaty referring to minority rights. The state possessed statutes, which constituted nations had an obligation to respect, but these laws were not permitted to hamper or interfere in the internal organisation of the nation gratuitously. The Hungarians wanted no more than to organise themselves nationally along the same lines as the other national groups in Transylvania.<sup>886</sup> The composition of the national assembly with its seat in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* had to be as democratic as possible since it was called upon to express the will of the Hungarians as a whole. National autonomy would encompass everyone within the boundaries of Romania who declared themselves Hungarian and some means of collectively accommodating the Jewish Hungarians had to be found, perhaps by drawing up a survey of the nation's members. Inclusion in the register under a given category would be based on self-determination and open to appeal with a court ruling settling cases of dispute. In mixed population areas the information in the register would entitle the national assembly to levy a tax for cultural and other purely national aims and could not exceed in total the amount paid by the individual in state and local tax unless the person concerned voluntarily contributed more.

Autonomy would apply to areas where the population was not mixed. Self-government would start at local level with the Hungarian national assembly and its executive heading and monitoring public administration at village and municipal level in areas where Hungarians were in the majority or dominated entirely. Minority rights would be rigorously enforced. In Hungarian areas not only the public administration

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<sup>884</sup> *Op. cit.*, p31.

<sup>885</sup> *Op. cit.*, p32.

<sup>886</sup> *Op. cit.*, p32.

would have to be Hungarian, but the judiciary as well. No restrictions could be placed on the free selection of civil servants. Similarly, local authorities would be empowered to adopt guidelines for language usage, but these would have to guarantee full equality for minorities meaning that legislative, administrative and judicial dealings would be conducted in Hungarian where the Hungarians were involved and they would therefore be informed about all legal decrees and other instructions applying to them in their native tongue.

Custodianship of national assets was a purely national responsibility and local government would draft directives for the economy accordingly, with free trade as the point of departure with implications for customs frontiers and railway infrastructure improvements.

As far as education was concerned, national autonomy precluded the state from running Hungarian schools. Maintenance costs would have to be covered by local government from the tax revenues paid into the treasury. Drawing up parallel curricula would be the subject of prior consultation and agreement, but the state would not be entitled to intervene in the employment of teachers. Wherever there were at least twenty pupils of school age the Hungarian local authorities would be able to provide them with a school. There would be no restrictions on who could found a school: all establishments would be supervised and inspected by the body brought into being by the Hungarian national assembly for that purpose.

In short, organisation was the key to salvaging the present and influencing the contours of the future.<sup>887</sup>

The final contribution by Árpád Paál focused on the organisation of political activity.

The peace treaty had given rise to a new set of parameters:

"The Hungarians attached to Romania were transformed into an internationally recognised separate nation within the new state situation with constitutional rights in its own new state and may call for the defence of these before the League of Nations. First and foremost the Hungarians must attain their demands by hard work themselves, regardless of whether the demands are made internally or externally, and the expression of that struggle can only take place within the prevailing state situation, not via the former state (...). The communities of the Hungarians arising from ideas, race and tradition may all endure beyond their division into several states

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<sup>887</sup> For the section outlining these rights see *Kiáltó szó*, pp32-35.



and we must attend to this by showing affection towards each other and achieve understanding for this community belonging to spiritual regions within the scope of our own state".<sup>888</sup>

Against this backdrop it is clear that liberties have to be fought for within the state concerned and that any interference by the *anyaországiak* would not be tolerated internationally. The Hungarians had only themselves to rely on in an unenviable set of circumstances brought about by a peace settlement riddled with deficiencies leading to the complete and counterproductive subjugation of the defeated peoples. Democracy was the remedy, as it encouraged increased collective self-awareness. Political activity could take as its starting point the desire to improve the treaty in the course of its practical implementation by awakening sympathy between peoples and fleshing out the paragraphs with forgiveness and freedoms. The first step towards realising these goals would be to form the Hungarian National Coalition (*Magyar Nemzeti Szövetség*) in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*. It would provide a framework for political activity on the part of the minority in all areas of state operation and represent their interests both inside and outside of parliament and at international level. A network of provincial boards would be linked to the central office and management committee. Until such a stage as it had gained official recognition from central government its mandate would be to attempt to arrive at solutions to a number of pressing issues, examples of which were resolving the problem of the destitute Hungarian civil servants and of sorting out the return of expelled persons and of other individuals exiled from their homes in Transylvania.<sup>889</sup>

Account would have to be taken of difference, such as the special case of the Székely in the light of the compactness and contiguity of the region they inhabited, their rights to educational and ecclesiastical autonomy as acknowledged in the minorities convention and the peculiarities of land ownership in their heartland. A separate Székely branch within the Coalition would be best suited to addressing their needs.<sup>890</sup>

The question of political parties inevitably had to be broached:

"I admit that it is justified and warranted for a variety of parties differentiated according to professional branches and world views to be founded. This has to be the

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<sup>888</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp41-42.

<sup>889</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp42 and 44-45.

<sup>890</sup> *Op. cit.*, p46. For the provisions of the convention see below.

case. However the Hungarian parties must stick together in fighting for their national individuality. For this reason party business has to be subordinated to or at least be brought into harmony with the general guiding principles of the National Coalition and the parties must stand side by side as allies in the view of the outside world".<sup>891</sup> The pamphlet eloquently throws the dilemmas of minority existence into high relief, chief amongst them the absence of a genuine alternative to standing up for rights to cultural and linguistic self-determination. The materiality of Hungarianness itself is not doubted, but a reorientation from Hungary to Transylvania as a distinct geographical and historical entity (rather than to the wider Kingdom of Romania) is incorporated into arguments about identity, with history occupying a prominent place alongside temperament and character. The preoccupation with presenting a united front to the outside world in order to assert claims to autonomy more effectively became a permanent feature of the rhetoric of playing within the system and scrupulously obeying the rules to deflect charges of disloyalty. The *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions left an indelible imprint on the consciousness of Hungarian campaigners, partly because they had been drawn up by the Romanian side and as such possessed a legitimacy untainted by Hungarian authorship, partly because they afforded a benchmark, a set of standards against which progress could be measured.<sup>892</sup> Hungarian identity in Transylvania was politicised and the business of politics for the minority centred on a defence of the unique identity and securing the means and resources to both maintain and reproduce it.

At the Peace Conference, the Allies were anxious to ensure that a balance was struck between acceding to the wishes of the successor states to the Dual Monarchy in terms of territorial aggrandisement and affording protection to the ethnic minorities created as a result. The population increases that the settlement brought about would only be a source of strength to the beneficiaries if the national minorities felt genuine loyalty towards the new states. Therefore providing international guarantees of their civic rights and formal equality was regarded as the most effective means of consolidating

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<sup>891</sup> *Op. cit.*, p47.

<sup>892</sup> Rather than as the wedge used to drive Hungary and Transylvania apart, although this was certainly an aspect Hungarians were aware of. For an *anyaország* view, see *A román uralom berendezkedése Erdélyben* by Benedek Jancsó in *Magyar Szemle*, 1928 September, pp123-129, Magyar Szemle Társaság, Budapest.

the post-war order.<sup>893</sup> On 28<sup>th</sup> April at its plenary session, the Conference adopted the founding charter of the League of Nations. The treaty presented to the representatives of the German government made it clear that self-determination (the ethnic principle) was deemed less important than economic and strategic considerations.<sup>894</sup> In May 1919, the Commission on New States and Minorities was instructed to draw up a minority protection treaty for Romania. On 23<sup>rd</sup> of the same month, the Commission invited Prime Minister Brătianu to express his opinion on the draft. Brătianu gave assurances that his country would guarantee the rights and freedoms of the minorities on the basis of a generous policy of administrative decentralisation and by allowing them full economic, cultural and linguistic development. Whereas Romania would be willing to adopt the provisions, to which all members of the League of Nations committed themselves, but that it would under no circumstances accept the interference of foreign powers in its internal affairs and the loss of sovereignty this implied.<sup>895</sup> His opposition did not soften at the next plenary, held on 31<sup>st</sup> May at which he was adamant that as long as the offending passages remained in the text, the Romanian government would not put its signature to it.<sup>896</sup> The deadlock was finally broken when the Allies sent a note to Bucharest in November threatening to declare Romania's territorial claims null and void unless it backed down. Brătianu resigned in protest, leaving his successor Vaida-Voevod to comply.<sup>897</sup> Thus the Treaty of Paris on minority rights was finally signed on 9th December 1919 (entering into force on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1920), Romania committed itself to enshrining a number of fundamental freedoms for its citizens irrespective of birth place, nationality, race, language or religion in the constitution and to ensuring that no law, decree or official measure subsequently enacted violated them. Article Three stipulated that optants choosing to become citizens of another country would have to change their place of permanent residence within twelve months, but that they would

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<sup>893</sup> József Galántai, *Kisebbségvédelem a párizsi békekonferencián, 1919-1920* (henceforth *Galántai*) p272, in *Bárdi*, pp270-277. As Galántai comments, this took precedence over granting the minorities autonomy, in other words their rights were implicitly confined to the cultural sphere, thereby confirming the "national" character of the new states (p273).

<sup>894</sup> *Galántai*, p273.

<sup>895</sup> *Kolar*, p62 and *Galántai*, pp274-5.

<sup>896</sup> *Galántai*, p275.

<sup>897</sup> *Kolar*, p62.

retain their property on Romania soil and could take any movables with them. Romanian citizenship would be open to all individuals in the territories annexed or to be annexed from Hungary provided that they were the children of parents whose permanent domicile was in these territories even if they themselves did not live there permanently at the time of entry into force of the Treaty. Within two years of the entry into force they could declare to the Romanian authorities their intention to renounce Romanian nationality. Romania would not take any steps to impede the acquisition of Romanian citizenship or exercise of the right to option. Article Eight specifically accorded equality in terms of civic and political rights to the Hungarians, including access to public office. All restrictions on the use of minority languages in private life, business transactions, churches, the press, publications and public meetings were prohibited. In court proceedings, whether orally or in writing, allowances had to be made for non-Romanian speakers. Equal treatment was to be guaranteed to linguistic, racial or religious minorities who were to enjoy comparable rights in setting up, managing and supervising charitable, religious or social institutions, schools and other educational establishments in which their mother tongue could be spoken freely. In cities and districts where a substantial proportion of the population were not native Romanian speakers the government would be obliged to facilitate state schooling for children in their own language although this did not prevent the Romanian government from making Romanian a compulsory subject. The minorities in these areas were entitled to receiving a fair share of central and local government budget allocations for educational, religious or charitable purposes. The Székely and Saxon communities were to be granted local self-administration on religious and educational issues monitored by the state. The provisions of the Treaty were subject to international guarantees by the League of Nations and could not be amended without the approval of the majority of members of the League's Council. Every member of the Council was entitled to draw its attention to actual or potential breaches of the undertakings of the Treaty so that the Council in turn could issue corrective instructions. Furthermore, Romania would be expected to cooperate in instances where differences of opinion existed between itself and members of the Entente (as co-signatories) or the Council by referring the dispute to the Permanent Tribunal.<sup>898</sup>

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<sup>898</sup> For the full text see *Mikó*, pp267-271.

Although Hungary was not a contracting party to the Treaty of Paris, the latter's international dimension alone meant that the states from whose bosom the minorities had been plucked were entitled to keep a vigilant eye on the fate of their former citizens and if they noticed ill treatment or discrimination they could turn to the League of Nations for remedy.<sup>899</sup> More generally, the Treaty enshrined the difference between material (ethnic/cultural) and functional (citizenship) identity in law, endorsing the minority's right to cultivate and express its Hungarianness within the framework of the new state (doing so was not an act of sedition, treason, subversion or disloyalty). Forcible assimilation was not condoned.

Although its wording was vague the deeper significance of the Treaty was not lost on the Hungarians. In the words of Emil Grandpierre, Deputy President of the Hungarian Coalition:

"...the Minority Treaty, however cautious in its definition of the term minority, nonetheless called a new personality in public law into being in the shape of the concept of a minority as the subject of the minority rights established in the Treaty. From this it followed logically and automatically that minorities as such had a right to found their organisation. The most expedient form for this organisation was the alliance, which would embrace all Hungarians and as a legal person represent the minority in the country and before the League of Nations".<sup>900</sup>

The Hungarians were furnished with an outlet for airing their grievances with at least a prospect of redress: the fact that submitting complaints to the League resembled clutching at straws was entirely due to the deficiencies of that organisation and its procedures. However, Romania was anxious to parade its credentials as a civilised and cultured nation, to boost its prestige and often the threat of turning to the League was enough to dissuade successive governments from some of their more extreme plans.

After initial complications caused by the foundation of the Hungarian People's Party (*Magyar Néppárt*) in *Bánffyhyunyad/Huedin* on 5th June 1921 (in which Károly Kós was secretary) a programme for the Coalition was finally drafted and the constituent

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<sup>899</sup> Cf. Artúr Balogh, *Jogállam és kisebbség*, Kriterion Kiadó, Bukarest, 1997, p149. On pp144 to 209 his essay *A kisebbségek védelme*, originally published in 1930, is reproduced. It contains a detailed analysis of the Treaty of Paris, its deficiencies and how these could have been remedied.

<sup>900</sup> Emil Grandpierre, *op. cit.* p 132.

assembly was held on 6th July.<sup>901</sup> Baron Sámuel Jósika<sup>902</sup> became its first President, Károly Kós its secretary and from the very outset unity as an ethnic minority and loyalty to the state were highlighted in the statutes and the working programme put forward by István Zágoni.<sup>903</sup> The Coalition immediately set about extending its organisational network and tackling the problems besetting Hungarian churches and schools. These efforts came to an abrupt and premature end when the activities of the Coalition were suspended prior to its dissolution on the flimsiest of pretexts: on 21st October a gala performance was scheduled in the National Theatre in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* (recently wrested from Hungarian hands) in honour of Queen Maria, who was paying an official visit to the city. Jósika was originally not invited to attend, but when the prefect, Metes, woke up to his faux pas he scribbled a few hasty lines on a visiting card in pencil. As a gentleman of the old school who had spent his prime in the court of Franz Josef, Jósika did not feel that the necessary proprieties had been followed and therefore did not turn up. The Romanian press castigated him for this perceived snub, viewing it as an expression of irredentism on the part of the Hungarians. Jósika's response was to clarify his stance via the office of the royal household steward. Metes retaliated by demanding that the Hungarian Coalition present its articles of association as approved by the Minister of Home Affairs. It was unable to comply and Metes, citing a ministerial decree from the days of Hungarian rule, which prohibited political organisation on the part of national minorities, shut it down as of 30th October, confiscating its documents and launching proceedings against its leaders.<sup>904</sup> Although it might appear trivial and petty this act of vengeance is quite revealing and in some ways typical of the high-handed contempt displayed by many Romanian bureaucrats.

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<sup>901</sup> For a more exhaustive account of the wranglings see Emil Grandpierre *op. cit.* pp133-134.

<sup>902</sup> Jósika (1848-1923) owner of extensive land holdings could look back upon an illustrious career. From 1885 to 1888 he had been the highest-ranking official in the administration of Kolozs county, from 1888 President of the *Erdélyi Gazdasági Egyesület* (Transylvanian Economic Association), from 1891 a member of the Hungarian Parliament, a permanent secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1893 and from 1895 to 1898 a minister in the Bánffy government. In 1911, he was Deputy-Speaker and the following year Speaker of the Upper House of the Parliament.

<sup>903</sup> For further details see *Mikó*, pp23-26.

<sup>904</sup> Grandpierre *op. cit.* p135 and *Mikó* p25.

## 2.6 Reproduction and Resources: The 1921 Land Reform

The official Romanian attitude towards the Hungarians was betrayed in a series of discriminatory and oppressive laws tailored to systematically strip the minority of the material and intellectual assets indispensable to sustaining and nurturing an independent identity as part of an unrelenting drive to impose national homogeneity where none existed. The penalty for deviance (in this case being Hungarian) was chronic insecurity and relegation to second-class citizenship (where citizenship was not refused altogether). In other words, a split between functional identity (citizenship) and material identity arising from a non-inclusive application of the national principle of classification on the part of the Romanian authorities was already apparent.

One of the first measures imbued with this spirit was the notorious land reform of 1921<sup>905</sup> (which consisted of four separate pieces of legislation applying to separate territories within Romania) with its blatant double standards. At the time of its publication in the *Monitorul Oficial* on 23rd July the Hungarians did not have even one single deputy in the Romanian Parliament and the Coalition could only adopt a stance in a manifesto, which condemned the absence of consultation and fulfilled the role of a formal protest.<sup>906</sup> That the objections fell on deaf ears is indicated by point c, section 131 of the 1923 constitution, which codified a number of its clauses.<sup>907</sup> Heralded as a social reform in the spirit of the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions its ostensible purpose was that of storming the last bastions of outdated Hungarian feudal privilege, putting an end to the inequities of the past by sharing out land amongst smallholders, a far healthier arrangement. This explanation conveniently sidestepped the historical reality of the high proportion of smallholdings, which before the war made up 69.9% of the total cultivated area (46.32% of which was the property of

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<sup>905</sup> For a complete analysis of the text including a full comparison with the law as applied to the Regat see *Az erdélyi föld sorsa. Az 1921. évi román földreform* by Dr. Miklós Móricz, Az Erdélyi Férfiak Egyesülete Budapest, 1932. This work contains a meticulous rebuttal of David Mitrany's *The Land and Peasant in Rumania. The War and the Agrarian Reform 1917-1921*, Carnegie Foundation, 1931. See also Kolar, pp130-143.

<sup>906</sup> Mikó, p30.

<sup>907</sup> *Op. cit.*, p30.

Romanian smallholders), compared with the 11.6% medium and 18.5% extensive holdings. Moreover, of the major holdings, only 32.5% were in private hands, the remainder owned by the state, local communities, churches, schools and other legal persons or held in joint tenancy.<sup>908</sup> The concentration of large and medium holdings in Hungarian and smaller holdings in Romanian hands was likewise the result of historical development, the exceptions to this rule being the Romanians who had been elevated to the ranks of the nobility and the descendants of the *Naszód/Násăud* frontier guard regiment.<sup>909</sup> In short the Romanian peasants in Transylvania were already considerably better off than their counterparts in the Regat. In spite of this, the law for the Regat stipulated that "The expropriation only affects holdings comprising at least 100 hectares of arable land".<sup>910</sup> Such a lower limit did not feature in the Transylvanian equivalent. Similarly, the maximum amount of land to be expropriated in the Regat was fixed at two million hectares whereas no such ceiling was agreed for Transylvania. Therefore whilst only a quarter of arable land in the Regat fell under the relevant provisions, nothing in Transylvania was exempt.<sup>911</sup> Section one of the laws for both the Regat and Transylvania list the objectives of the expropriation. Whilst the former mentions increasing the extent of peasant holdings and creating common pastures alongside the general interest and economic and cultural considerations, the latter covers expanding and supplementing peasant holdings in villages, common grazing land and forests, facilitating the development of national industry by keeping hold of land necessary not only for existing industry, but also for industry, which will doubtlessly be established in future for geographical, ethnographic and geological reasons, easing life in cities, mining and spa centres by keeping back areas for workers, civil servants and other persons of limited means to give them the opportunity to set up small farms and satisfying demands for cultural, economic, social and physical education in the public interest thereby embodying a radically different philosophy.<sup>912</sup>

The optants were classified as absentees (individuals who dwelt abroad between 1st December 1918 and the tabling of the land reform bill except those on official

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<sup>908</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp28 and 29.

<sup>909</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp28-29.

<sup>910</sup> Móricz *op. cit.* p84.

<sup>911</sup> See Móricz *op. cit.*, pp84-85 and *Hetven év*, p34.

<sup>912</sup> Móricz *op. cit.*, pp82-83, *Mikó*, p31.



business) and their entire holdings were seized by the state, a serious breach of the Paris Treaty. The 348 persons concerned lost approximately 390,000 hectares, 4.91% of which were so-called dwarf holdings, making a nonsense of the declared motive of benefiting the worse off at the expense of the proprietors of sprawling estates.<sup>913</sup>

Since the law was promulgated after the dates quoted there was nothing that the optants could do to avoid falling foul of these provisions and to add insult to injury many of the victims had been hounded out of Transylvania by the authorities and deliberately not permitted to return to their homes.<sup>914</sup>

Perhaps the most flagrant abuse pertained to the *csíki magánjavak* (the property of the descendants of the First Székely Frontier Guard Infantry Regiment gifted to the original families by Josef the Second on 27 May 1783 following the settlement of an old frontier dispute between Transylvania and Moldova in 1769), which came under the heading of *közbirtokosság* or joint tenancy.

Until 1851 both the Székely families of *Csík/Ciuc* and their Romanian counterparts from the *Naszód/Năsăud* regiment were able to make full use of their award when Franz Josef the First confiscated the Székely land by way of retaliation for their involvement in the Hungarian War of Independence. At the same time he granted the *Naszód/Năsăud* regiment's lands to their families in perpetuity.

In the wake of the Compromise, the king returned the land and properties to the communities of *Csík/Ciuc* and *Háromszék/Trie-Scaune* also in perpetuity, indivisibly and as private property for the purpose of fostering agricultural activity, industry and trade with a view to raising the level of prosperity of the Székely people.

Most of the 35 647 hectares of land in *Csík/Ciuc* consisted of forest best suited to supporting livestock and as such not a prime candidate for being divided up. The *csíki magánjavak* were, however, deemed to belong to the state whilst the *Naszód/Năsăud* properties were left untouched. The loss of not only the forests, but also the pastures, the barracks in *Csíkszereda/Miercurea-Ciuc*, girls' school, orphanage and many other valuable buildings was devastating for the 15,000 families suddenly deprived of all means of sustenance.<sup>915</sup>

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<sup>913</sup> Móricz *op. cit.*, pp101-103.

<sup>914</sup> Lukács *op. cit.*, pp164-166.

<sup>915</sup> For this section see Móricz *op. cit.*, pp115-118; *Hetven év*, p35 and György Ladihay, *Az erdélyi agrártörvény és végrehajtása* in *Magyar Szemle*, October 1928, pp152-153, *Magyar Szemle Társaság*, Budapest.

Hungarians who had settled in the region after 1st January 1885<sup>916</sup> were to forfeit all holdings above 3.99 hectares - although the expropriation committees often arbitrarily reduced this to a mere 2.85 hectares - and since the average size of the Hungarian holdings affected was between 9 and 12.5 hectares the motives behind the expropriation were questionable to say the least. The victims turned to the League of Nations for redress.<sup>917</sup>

The National Hungarian Party (*Országos Magyar Párt*) later assessed the work carried out by the district and country committees as follows:

"As a general rule the members of the expropriation committees were the embodiment of racial hatred, national intolerance and corruption. The majority were composed of unqualified individuals who did not even have the most elementary knowledge at their disposal. Thus apart from the implementation of the law in bad faith the losses suffered by the landowners were increased due to the members of the committees being ignorant and uninformed. The committee members from the Regat were not familiar with the cadastral register system, but they were equally unfamiliar with the value of the land, which ought to have been the basis for making decisions.

According to the provisions of the law the most important role was supposed to be that of the designated engineers, but their places were occupied by lay civil servants. Most of the members of the committees came from the Regat and were not only unfamiliar with our legal system but also with our language and were therefore not even able to communicate with the landowners undergoing expropriation. The result was that enforcement of the law varied not only from one province but from one committee and one landowner to the next.

Amongst landowning circles a movement got under way to urge that Transylvanian members be appointed alongside the Regat officials who were entirely unfamiliar with the set up. By way of response the landowners received a firm promise from the competent authorities, but instead - to their utmost astonishment - the Minister of

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<sup>916</sup> These individuals had moved mainly to *Temes/Timiş* and *Krassó-Szörény/Caraş-Severin* in accordance with the laws of 1886, 1894 and 1911 and had purchased the land at the going rate. See Móricz *op. cit.*, pp118-120.

<sup>917</sup> See Ladihay *op. cit.* p153 and Mikó, pp 35-36.

Agriculture withdrew the mandate of those Transylvanian members who were already members of the committees, delegating officials from the Regat in their stead".<sup>918</sup>

The glaring discrepancy between the prices set for expropriated land in the Regat and Transylvania rubbed salt in the many wounds. Whereas the reference years for the Regat were 1917-1922, the cut off point for Transylvania was 1913: the price in (paper) *lej* could not exceed the average in (gold) *korona* for the period up to then, which fluctuated between 600 and 1000 gold *korona*. An insight into the actual value was provided by Petru Suciú in a piece on *Torda-Aranyos/Turda-Arieş* county in which he pointed out that the value of the land to be expropriated there was fixed at 104.5 million *lej*, but that its market value was at least 800 million *lej*.<sup>919</sup> The erosive effects of inflation meant a hefty loss was incurred anyway, but the compensation was paid out in nominal value 5% annuity bonds on which interest would be paid over 50 years rather than in cash. To all practical intents and purposes this meant that the land was confiscated without recompense.<sup>920</sup>

The impact of the law on the Hungarian churches, schools and foundations was financially devastating, rendering it virtually impossible for them to continue the vital educational and cultural work expected of them at a juncture where need for it had never been so pressing. 84.54% of all ecclesiastical holdings were expropriated<sup>921</sup> with no account taken of the fact that the role of the church was often that of steward: "The bulk of the Hungarian ecclesiastical estates were not the property of the church, but belonged to various funds administrated by the church. Hence all the holdings of the Transylvanian Roman Catholic Officials were the property of a foundation. The estate in *Kolozsmonostor* (is in the outskirts of *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*) was owned by the educational fund, those in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* and *Váralmás/Almaşu* by the bursary fund, one third of the *Radnóti/Iernut* estate belonged to the religious fund and a further third to the bursary fund and the *Alsóbajom/Boian* estate was similarly divided between three funds. The situation of the Protestant churches, whose foundations for the most part originated from the era of the Transylvanian

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<sup>918</sup> Quoted from Dr. József Oberding, *Gazdasági Sérelmeink és Kívánságaink*, Kolozsvár, 1931 in Móricz *op. cit.*, pp142-143. No indication is given of the page number in the original.

<sup>919</sup> Quoted in Móricz, p136 from Suciú's *Judetul Turda*.

<sup>920</sup> See Móricz, pp135-141; *Mikó*, p37; *Hetven év*, p35; *Ladihay*, 154 and *Kolar*, pp137-8.

<sup>921</sup> *Mikó*, p33 and *Kolar*, p140.

principality, was no different. Right up to the expropriation they were in the service of education".<sup>922</sup>

In *Marosszentimre/Sîntimbru* the reformed church along with the arable land and manse built only a decade previously were earmarked for expropriation on the pretext that its congregation had declined. In spite of the compilation of documentary evidence to the contrary the committee elected to go ahead with handing it over to the Greek Catholic (Uniate) Church and was only thwarted by the refusal of the *Balázsfalva/Blaj* archbishop to accept it. This was but one example of many and not all churches were so fortunate.<sup>923</sup>

The Hungarian Cultural Society of Transylvania EMKE (*Erdélyi Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület*) holdings, including the Agricultural School at *Algyógy/Geogiau* complete with movables, were expropriated with the exception of a modest portion of forest land (leaving just under 39 hectares of the original 973.5). Had the law been applied properly, 57 hectares of arable land would have been kept for the model farm alongside a further 114 hectares of arable land and an appropriate quantity of forest and pasture for the purposes of supporting the school plus 17 hectares of arable land for EMKE's orphanage. Although EMKE appealed against the decision it never reached the courts, leaving the society crippled with all the implications that entailed in terms of the impoverishment of Hungarian cultural life.<sup>924</sup>

Section 40 of the law empowered the state to hold land in reserve for general cultural, economic, social, military, educational and other unspecified purposes contributing to the common good. Once again an upper limit was imposed on such reserves for the Regat without corresponding provision for Transylvania. In 1925 the state reserve in Transylvania comprised some 527,449 hectares. These were in the main leased out for a pittance by way of rewarding political cronies. The 11th December 1925 edition of *Romania* wryly remarked:

"If some day the country's situation takes shape along the lines of the new land ownership system it will certainly be possible to ascertain that not even half of the

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<sup>922</sup> Quoted from Dr. József Oberding, *Gazdasági Sérelmeink és Kívánságaink*, p378 and following, *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* 1931 in Móricz, p97.

<sup>923</sup> Móricz, pp97-98 and Mikó, pp32-33.

<sup>924</sup> Móricz, pp97-100 and Mikó, p33.

total expropriated area will have ended up in the hands of farmers and that the aim of the expropriation was not in the slightest to allow the greatest number of impecunious peasants access to land, but its ambition was to create a capitalist bourgeoisie. This is the only means of explaining the sudden appearance of a new landowning class in the place of peasants running farms. Its new recruits are lawyers, doctors, civil servants, engineers, lecturers, teachers, priests, machinists, cereals merchants, horse-dealers and so on, individuals who have nothing to do with farming the land, village life or livestock breeding".<sup>925</sup>

## 2.7 Reproduction and Resources: Laws on Education

With its undeniable role in consolidating and reproducing identity, the realm of education was predestined to become an arena of conflict. Indeed any encroachment on mother tongue schooling potentially put the future of the minority at risk by lowering their level of attainment and thereby narrowing their occupational and cultural horizons. On a slightly more subtle level, robbing the Hungarians of a new generation of intellectuals would deprive them of an independent voice to articulate their identity (through producing representations for either a Hungarian or a Romanian audience) and speak up about their concerns in public. The battle for rights in education was a battle for control not only over minds, but also over hearts and souls.

In Transylvania the church-run denominational schools had traditionally been a formidable presence within the context of a Hungarian state that contented itself with determining the type of schools it wanted, defining the syllabus and performing inspections rather than interfering in every minute detail of day to day operations or asserting a monopoly over education.<sup>926</sup> Indeed state schooling in Transylvania only dated back to 1873 and even then it was conceived of as providing assistance to rather than usurping or supplanting the denominational schools.<sup>927</sup> Whittling down the influence of the latter not only curtailed opportunities for receiving education in

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<sup>925</sup> Quoted in Ladihay, p155.

<sup>926</sup> See for example Olivér Eöttevényi *A trianoni szerződés kulturális következményei in Igazságot Magyarországnak*, p180.

<sup>927</sup> *Hetven év*, p27.

Hungarian, but also eliminated competition with state schools thus placing the minority in a relationship of complete dependency on the good graces of the government. Eliminating their secure source of income by means of the land reform was but the first skirmish in what was to evolve into a war of attrition. According to a decree of 1921 from the Ministry of Education all pupils and teachers at such schools had to be members of the denomination concerned meaning that parents with a different religious background were barred from them.<sup>928</sup> As of 1922 teachers at the Hungarian denominational schools lost their entitlement to half price rail tickets. Moreover their rights to a pension were not recognised and they were required to sit a Romanian language examination with failure leading to immediate dismissal. Applications for state funding were continually turned down when addressed by Hungarian church-run schools, though the same was not true of their Saxon counterparts.<sup>929</sup> A network of state schools with Hungarian as the language of tuition was built up in Hungarian villages, recruiting the teachers formerly employed at denominational schools. The loss of staff incurred by the latter was enough in itself to close many of them down. In order to overcome the reluctance of Hungarian parents to send their children to the state schools, the teachers - fearing for their jobs as they were contractually obliged to fill classes - enlisted the aid of Romanian school inspectors to bring pressure to bear on the vulnerable families of low-ranking civil servants and the retired to set a good example.<sup>930</sup> Once they had outlived their usefulness these state schools were not spared. Between 1932 and 1937 in *Udvarhely/Odorhei* county 74 Hungarian schools or sections were romanianized or shut permanently.<sup>931</sup>

In spite of promises made prior to the parliamentary elections in 1922 to the effect that denominational schools would not be persecuted, but on the contrary be guaranteed the conditions in which to flourish more than they had even under Hungarian rule, the Liberal Minister of Education Anghelescu soon revealed his true intent. Apart from reiterating the provision about denominational homogeneity

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<sup>928</sup> *Op. cit.*, p24.

<sup>929</sup> See *Hetven év*, p24.

<sup>930</sup> Endre Barabás: *A magyar iskolák a román uralom alatt*, p144 in *Magyar Szemle*, October 1928, Magyar Szemle Társaság, Budapest.

<sup>931</sup> *Hetven év*, p25, quoting Árpád Kiss: *Az állami magyar tannyelvű elemi iskolák és a magyar tagozatok* in *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1936, p205.

amongst pupils, he stipulated that the state curriculum be introduced into the church-run schools. From the beginning of the 1923-1924 school year in state and denominational schools alike Romanian language, literature, history, geography and constitutional studies were to be taught in Romanian and Romanian would be the sole language of tuition in the first year at monastic, village, town and guild or society-run secondary schools. Inspectors were issued instructions to demand meticulous implementation of all decrees, orders and the like hitherto adopted from the denominational schools as well as the relevant primary legislation. If they were to stumble upon any slackness or recalcitrance they were expected to submit a proposal to have the offending institution closed down or to have its right to issue valid certificates withdrawn. As a result the inspectors vied with each other in sniffing out deficiencies although in most instances requests for closure or forfeiture were not accompanied by due justification.<sup>932</sup>

On 26th July 1924 a law on primary school education containing a number of highly controversial provisions was passed. It began by stating that compulsory primary education be uniform throughout the country, that directing and supervising it was the task of the state and that no school could be founded without a permit from the Ministry of Education. The language of teaching would be Romanian and in non-Romanian-speaking communities the Minister would be empowered to set up minority language primaries in identical proportion to the number of equivalent schools in Romanian-speaking areas.<sup>933</sup> Although nursery schools for five to seven year-olds were also included under the scope of application of the law, the provision on minority languages did not extend to them (nor for that matter to adult education courses).<sup>934</sup>

Article eight stated that citizens of Romanian origin who had forgotten their mother tongue were obliged to enrol their children in state or private schools where the language of tuition was Romanian. Article 19 supplemented this by making it mandatory for parents whose children attended private schools to inform the headmaster of the state school of this fact in writing. At no juncture was any

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<sup>932</sup> Mikó, p50 and Barabás *op. cit.*, p145.

<sup>933</sup> *Hetven év*, p25 and Eöttevényi *op. cit.* pp180-181. This principle was never put into practice. Cf. also Kolar, pp114-5.

<sup>934</sup> *Hetven év*, p25.

indication given as to what precisely signified Romanian origin, leaving it very much to the discretion of local officials to pass judgement and they zealously set about analysing names and scrutinising family trees to uncover relatives in the ascending line who might have been Romanian or members of the Orthodox church.<sup>935</sup>

Article 159 created a so-called "culture zone", covering counties such as *Csík/Ciuc* where 85.7% of the population was Hungarian, *Háromszék/Trei-Scaune* (86.6%) and *Udvarhely/Odorheiu* (95.1%).<sup>936</sup> Teachers from the Regat willing to settle there would be paid a salary 50% higher than their Transylvanian colleagues. They would furthermore be eligible for promotion one to two years earlier and if they made the move permanent would be awarded ten hectares of land from the state reserve.<sup>937</sup>

Instead of championing Romanian culture these teachers were inadvertently responsible for promoting illiteracy as they were entirely unable to communicate with their charges. An official report by the inspector for *Maros-Torda/Mureş-Turda* on the work of the schools in his district in 1924-1925 points out that the 120 young teachers unable to speak a word of Hungarian had not achieved anything and were like fish out of water socially with only the registrar and the gendarmes for company. Similarly in *Csík/Ciuc* the school council arrived at the conclusion that the reason why the children were unable to read or write in the third year of their education was attributable to the complete absence of mutual intelligibility between themselves and their teachers following the abolition of Hungarian as the language of tuition in the county.<sup>938</sup>

The costs of the state schools (construction, fittings, teaching equipment, maintenance, headmaster's accommodation and so on) were, moreover, to be borne by the local community with the exception of teachers' wages, which were the responsibility of the state. This placed a dual burden on the Hungarians who had to sustain the denominational schools as well.<sup>939</sup>

On 22nd December 1925 a separate law on private schools entered into force following a stormy passage through Parliament and was little more than a summary of the various decrees dealt with above. Denominational schools were deemed to fall

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<sup>935</sup> *Hetven év*, p25; *Mikó*, p50; *Eöttevényi op. cit.*, pp205-206; *Barabás op. cit.*, p145 and *Kolar*, p115.

<sup>936</sup> On the "culture zone", see *Mikó*, pp50-1 and *Kolar*, pp115-6.

<sup>937</sup> *Hetven év*, p26; *Mikó*, pp50-51; *Eöttevényi*, pp204-205 and *Barabás*, p145.

<sup>938</sup> *Barabás op. cit.* pp145-146.

<sup>939</sup> *Eöttevényi*, pp 181 and 204; *Hetven év*, pp26-27 and *Mikó*, p50.



into this category, which represented a substantial demotion. Henceforward only Romanian citizens could found private schools on the basis of a permit from the Ministry of Education and were subject to its supervision and inspections. Teacher training colleges and universities could no longer be private with the exception of teacher training establishments in continuous operation prior to 1st December 1918. As far as language was concerned, Romanian was the sole instrument of tuition in the institutions of recognised monastic orders and in schools attended by children whose parents were of Romanian origin. Where all pupils shared the same mother tongue the language used for teaching purposes could differ from that of the state. Hungarian-speaking Jews, however, were relegated to either Romanian or Hebrew-language schools. Moreover in all private schools of whatever type Romanian language, literature, history and geography had to be taught in Romanian by qualified teachers fluent in that tongue. Private schools did not have the right to issue valid certificates, but had to make do with attestations of studies completed. The former could be obtained from the Ministry of Education, but the procedures were laden with red tape and a favourable response was by no means a foregone conclusion.<sup>940</sup>

The threat to the denominational schools was so great that representatives of the Hungarian Roman Catholic, Protestant and Unitarian churches had done their utmost to prevent its adoption. They each convened extraordinary assemblies on 14 May at which they unanimously approved bringing the matter to the attention of the League of Nations, having failed to persuade Anghelescu to remove some of the more severe measures. In September two supplementary petitions were sent to Geneva. On 6th November a 19 point agreement on the subject of private education was reached, but the government did not stick to its side of the bargain, regarding the exercise as nothing more than a convenient means of taking the wind out of the sails of the complaints lodged. When invited to submit its observations on the issue to the Secretary General's office, the Romanian government took the opportunity to present its views at length, denying that there was any substance to the grievances. Instead Hungarian educational policy of the past was denounced by way of exoneration, although the relevant texts were deliberately misquoted. On the subject of the

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<sup>940</sup> *Hetven év*, pp27-28 and *Eöttevényi*, p207.

Apponyi regime's 1907 law,<sup>941</sup> Anghelescu's stock argument, concerning how there were certain strings attached to receipt of financial assistance from the state with Hungarian history, geography, study of the constitution, arithmetic and other subjects having to be taught in Hungarian, was advanced. Although instruction in these subjects was indeed mandatory there was no clause insisting on use of Hungarian.<sup>942</sup>

On 18th March 1926 the relevant committee within the League concluded its deliberations on the matter with a report in which it expressed certain doubts about the final text of the law, but basically endorsed the Romanian approach.<sup>943</sup>

In March of 1925 a decree on baccalaureate examinations was published. Any pupils with aspirations to proceed into higher education were required to sit an examination in Romanian language and literature, the history, geography and constitution of Romania, French language and literature, science and two other subjects designated by the Ministry in front of boards appointed by the state, whose members did not understand Hungarian and made it their business to set the hurdle unreasonably high. Of the 401 Hungarian candidates in 1925 only 100 passed and between 1925 and 1927 the figure for students from the denominational schools was 32%.<sup>944</sup>

General provisions pertaining to state secondary education were contained within the law of 15th May 1928. The minority language could be taught as an optional subject and special sections for pupils with a mother tongue other than Romanian created (although, as we saw earlier, this did not mean that all lessons were held in Hungarian) in areas where non-native speakers formed the majority of the local population. Since it was not compulsory to do so, however, Hungarian-language teaching in state secondary schools all but completely disappeared by the end of the 1920s.<sup>945</sup>

As far as higher education was concerned, only the state could run universities and existing universities were appropriated by the state in a series of separate laws.

Eleven months prior to the signing of the Treaty of Trianon on 23rd September 1919,

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<sup>941</sup> Albert Apponyi (1846-1933) was Minister of Religious Affairs and Education in Hungary from 8th April 1906 to 17th January 1910 (and again from 1917 to 1918). Anghelescu was Minister of Education in Romania from 1922 to 1926 and from 1933 to 1937.

<sup>942</sup> Mikó, pp51-52 and Barabás *op. cit.*, pp146-147.

<sup>943</sup> Mikó, p52.

<sup>944</sup> Mikó, p51; *Hetven év* p29 and Kolar, pp117-8.

<sup>945</sup> *Hetven év*, p29.

the Governing Council (*Consul Dirigent*) declared the University of *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* Romanian in a law published in the Official Journal and Romanian became the language of teaching at those institutions, which were not closed down leaving only aspirant men of the cloth with the option of training for their vocation in their mother tongue.<sup>946</sup>

Politically the Hungarians were hampered at the local and national elections by fraud, intimidation, bribery, arrests<sup>947</sup> and manipulation of the administrative boundaries such as set out in the standardisation law of 14th June 1925, which led to the break up of counties in such a way that established economic and cultural units were shattered and the minority populations were reduced (thereby cutting the potential number of minority representatives in local government bodies). Hungarian villages were attached to Romanian-dominated areas and the same tactic was followed in relation to the Romanian villages on the fringes of the Székely regions. A similar law from 14th August 1938 divided the country into ten provinces named after rivers, mountains or the sea. The Hungarians in the Székely regions were split amongst provinces where the Romanians were in the majority with for example *Háromszék/Trei-Scaune* and *Brassó/Braşov* counties subsumed under *Bucegi* province, which had its administrative seat in Bucharest.<sup>948</sup> At the 1939 elections the constituency frontiers matched those of the provinces.<sup>949</sup>

In the wake of the dissolution of the *Magyar Szövetség*, two rival parties, the Hungarian People's Party (*Magyar Néppárt*) and the Hungarian National Party (*Magyar Nemzeti Párt*) seemed poised to scramble for Hungarian votes at the 1922 elections. In the end, however, they fought together.<sup>950</sup> Recognising that the Hungarian interest could be defended most effectively by a single party, the National Hungarian Party (*Országos Magyar Párt*) was founded on 28th December 1922 in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* with Sámuel Jósika as its president, Gusztáv Haller as its

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<sup>946</sup> *Op. cit.*, p32. On the fate of teacher-training institutions, see *Kolar*, pp124-5 and on the University, *idem*, p125.

<sup>947</sup> See for example Maniu's denunciation of the practices employed at the 1922 elections, which he described as a blot on the national copybook and a European scandal, quoted in *Mikó*, p28. On dubious electoral practices, see also *Kolar*, pp70-2, 78 and 82.

<sup>948</sup> *Hetven év*, pp37-38.

<sup>949</sup> *Op. cit.*, p36.

<sup>950</sup> *Hetven év*, p38 and *Mikó*, p26.

deputy president and István Nalóczy as its secretary.<sup>951</sup> Its programme called for constitutional recognition of the Hungarian minority along the lines of the *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* decisions and the peace treaty and national autonomy. This would entail self-government in the mother tongue for the minority with its own local administration and judiciary. It also urged that the most flagrant abuses of electoral procedure be remedied and the rule of law be fully enforced. Importance was attached to freedom of religious expression and defence of the rights of churches to establish and maintain schools at all levels, to the reform of land ownership and the exemption of ecclesiastical holdings and similar estates run by foundations to fund schools from the provisions of the 1921 law as well as full compensation being awarded to those who had lost their land through expropriation.<sup>952</sup>

Until it was disbanded on 31st March 1938 (as part of the constitution instituting the royal dictatorship, which scrapped all political parties bar one, retaining an entirely impotent Parliament to give a veneer of democracy) it loyally stood up for the Hungarians, submitting no less than 15 complaints to the League of Nations. Between the demise of the Magyar Part and the outbreak of the war the Hungarians were represented within the National Regeneration Front, but this was a shotgun wedding rather than a marriage of convenience and achieved little.<sup>953</sup>

## 2.8 Transylvanianism: The *Erdélyi Helikon*

On the cultural front, the reorientation away from Hungary and the production of representations of the new identity that this implied was undertaken by the Transylvanianists.

In 1924, on the initiative of Károly Kós, the Transylvanian Artistic Guild (*Erdélyi Szépmíves Céh*) was founded and following the gathering of leading literary figures at *Marosvécs/Brăncovenesti* at the instigation of János Kemény on 17th June 1926, was taken over by the disparate group of writers collectively referred to as *Helikon* (their

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<sup>951</sup> For further details see *Mikó*, pp40–41.

<sup>952</sup> *Mikó*, pp271–274.

<sup>953</sup> See *Mikó*, pp218–249.

journal *Erdélyi Helikon* was launched in 1928).<sup>954</sup> The authors divided into two principle groups: one centering on Aladár Kuncz (who became the editor of *Helikon*)<sup>955</sup> and counting Géza Tabéry,<sup>956</sup> Ernő Ligeti,<sup>957</sup> Károly Kós, Sándor Remenyik<sup>958</sup> and Sándor Makkai amongst others in its ranks and one with a more pronounced Székely character including János Bartalis,<sup>959</sup> László Tompa,<sup>960</sup> József Nyírő,<sup>961</sup> Sándor Kacsó<sup>962</sup> and Áron Tamási.<sup>963</sup> The purpose of the meeting was to

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<sup>954</sup> On János Kemény's role, see *A Mecénás – Kemény János és a Helikon*, Helikon-Kemény János Alapítvány, Marosvásárhely, 2001.

<sup>955</sup> Kuncz (1886-1931) worked as a teacher from 1909 and was a regular contributor to *Nyugat*, writing essays on aesthetics. His novel *Fekete kolostor* (1931) dealt with the years he spent in internment camps in France during the First World War. Having moved to *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* in 1923, he edited the *Helikon* from 1929.

<sup>956</sup> Tabéry (1890-1958) held posts in the civil service during the Károlyi government and the short-lived Soviet Republic.

<sup>957</sup> Ligeti (1891-1944) worked mainly as a journalist, founding the weekly *Független Újság* in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* in 1934. He moved to Budapest in 1940 where he wrote for the daily *Magyar Nemzet* until murdered together with his family by supporters of the Arrow Cross Movement.

<sup>958</sup> The poet Reményik (1890-1941) was editor-in-chief of the literary journal *Pásztortűz* from 1921 and published irredentist verses under the pseudonym of Végvári.

<sup>959</sup> Bartalis (1893-1977), also a poet published his first pieces in *Nyugat* in 1916. He returned to Transylvania in 1941 after spending a number of years in Hungary. His memoirs appeared in 1972.

<sup>960</sup> Tompa (1883-1964) became chief archivist of *Udvarhely/Odorhei* county in 1918, giving up his post following the Romanian takeover. Editor of *Székely közélet* from 1920, he also wrote for *Pásztortűz*, *Ellenzék* and *Helikon*.

<sup>961</sup> Nyírő (1889-1953) was ordained as a priest in 1912. On leaving the priesthood in 1919, he worked for *Keleti Újság* until becoming a farmer in 1931. In 1938, when he went back to journalism, he edited the newspaper he had formerly written for. After moving to Budapest in 1941, he became a member of the Arrow Cross Parliament in Sopron. At the end of the war he escaped to Germany, then Madrid where he returned to the cloth.

<sup>962</sup> Kacsó (1901-1984) wrote for *Keleti Újság* (1923-5) and *Újság* (1925-7). Within the *Helikon* circle, he belonged to the so-called *Székely* group. From autumn 1927 he was a member of staff at *Brassói Lapok*, becoming its editor from 1940 until it was banned. Released from internment camp following the formation of the Groza government, he edited *Falvak Népe* and was President of the MNSZ (for which see Chapter Three) from 1947-1951.

<sup>963</sup> Tamási (1897-1966) lived in the USA from 1923-6. He was involved in virtually every Transylvanian intellectual and literary movement, his main theme being the *Székely*, especially the struggle of the poor against nature and their betters in the aristocracy in scraping a living.

take stock of the state of Hungarian literature in Transylvania and discuss its future.<sup>964</sup> In the course of its 20-year history, the coalition produced a steady stream of works in a humanist vein with the explicit aim of fostering greater mutual understanding between the majority and minority populations through their representations of Hungarian identity in Transylvania, whether in poetry, ethnographic studies or historical novels. The first *Marosvécs/Brăncovenești* resolutions were adamant that for the Hungarians to have a future their leaders must concentrate on cultural life. Educating the people and tackling the problems of literature and art had to be given the same priority as political objectives, which required greater involvement of the natural representatives of intellectual and moral forces in decisions affecting the minority's fate as they were best suited to putting the spiritual preconditions for peaceful economic and political cooperation in place.<sup>965</sup> The essence of their philosophy, which came to be known as Transylvanianism,<sup>966</sup> was eloquently summarised by Aladár Kuncz in an article from 1928. Transylvania itself possessed distinct natural boundaries:

"Its geographical character is that of the wild flarings of natural forces frozen into tangible form. The Eurasian ranges of the Carpathians stand guard over its eastern and southern frontiers. Their eyes survey the scene from endless and inscrutable distances; they are the symbolic giants of the ancient changes that took place in Europe and Asia in prehistoric times and symbolise a protective presence for Eurasian universality and in particular for the human and natural dramas played out in Transylvania within the forbidding ring they form with their evergreen pine-crowned slopes and eternally snow-capped peaks".<sup>967</sup>

With its rich salt and mineral deposits, Transylvania was a living textbook on the earth's evolution, a self-contained unit that had attracted various civilisations since its

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<sup>964</sup> See Pomogáts, *op. cit.*, p71 and Jenő Szentimrei: *Erdély tízéves magyar irodalma*. In: *Nyugat*, 1930, issue seven. Source: CD-ROM: *Nyugat 1908-1941. Egy irodalmi legenda digitálisan*, Arcanum adatbázis, Budapest. Henceforward *Arcanum*. No page numbers are indicated throughout. On *Nyugat*, see Sugar 1994, p326; Molnár, p237 and Kontler, pp317-8 and 358-9.

<sup>965</sup> Pomogáts, *op. cit.*, pp73-74.

<sup>966</sup> For an alternative account of Transylvanianism in culture and politics, see Piroska Balogh, *Transylvanianism: Revision or Regionalism?* in Romsics 1999, pp243-262.

mention by Herodotus. It had been crossed by all the Asian peoples in their search for a place to settle; the Dacians, Romans, Goths, Huns, Gepids, Avars and Southern Slavs had all found a home there for shorter or longer periods until the Hungarians finally made it theirs. Just as Transylvania's natural landscape had always retained its own enchanting and special harmony with its variety of scenery and capricious formations so the peoples who had become established in its tracts had been compelled to seek a unifying, cohesive idea beyond the conflicts and antagonisms or else they perished. Transylvania had always been a variegated panorama in the history of peoples as well as nature. Its historical destiny had been that of a gateway through which barbarian peoples headed westwards in search of their golden calves. The surging population movements eventually calmed:

"The Hungarians gradually caused what was to become the defensive bastion of Western European culture and at the same time its last outpost to crystallise from the chaotic state of affairs in Transylvania. Of course they did not put an end to the changing composition of the people of Transylvania, but that was never their intention. They only intervened to quell attacks, which threatened their culture, religion or the organs of state they had founded, but otherwise, as they also demonstrated with their large-scale settlements of Romanians and Saxons, they always preserved and respected the diverse ethnic character of Transylvania as ordained by historical fate".<sup>968</sup>

Even in the most despotic phases of the Hungarian monarchy ancient privileges such as those enjoyed by the Székely and the Saxons remained unmolested and from the 16th century onwards when Hungary was groaning under the weight of centralising, monolingual and single faith Austrian imperialism, Transylvania was the refuge of the Hungarian monarchy's ideal and the defender of religious freedom. This was its golden age, when it did not try to obstruct religious or ethnic aspirations.

In terms of its culture Transylvania could boast similar diversity. Every single Western European intellectual and artistic trend had left a mark there, from Romanesque and Gothic to Renaissance and Baroque all styles were represented in

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<sup>967</sup> Aladár Kuncz: *Az erdélyi gondolat erdélyi magyar irodalmában*. In: *Nyugat*, 1928, issue 20.

*Arcanum*. For another account of Transylvanianism, see Artúr Balogh, *Az erdélyi szellem* (originally published in 1941), *op.cit.*, pp266-276.

<sup>968</sup> Kuncz, *op. cit.*

monuments of stone and the ideals of the Enlightenment and democracy had their flock and martyrs.

The Union with the Hungarian crown in 1867 introduced radical changes.<sup>969</sup> Serious errors were committed, although everything was in transition when the war interrupted developments. Hungarian centralism absorbed many of Transylvania's time-honoured unique features along with vast amounts of the Hungarians' cultural strength, which weakened them whilst the national consciousness of the Romanians and Saxons became inordinately stronger. What was missing from Hungarian policy during the fifty years was precisely the input of Transylvanian inspiration.

In short, the Transylvanian idea consisted of the wise and ingenious balance of the interests of nations, religions, world views, folk customs, social classes and external powers, tolerance incarnate and was equally immanent in the region's natural beauty as it was in its history, culture and literature. That careful balance was not synonymous with blandness or monotony had been amply corroborated by its vibrant intellectual life from the Bolyais<sup>970</sup> and János Apáczai Csere<sup>971</sup> on the Hungarian side through the Transylvanian School and Eminescu<sup>972</sup> on the Romanian and Honterus and Brukenthal on the Saxon. The culture of each of the three nations developed in close contact with that of the respective mother countries.

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<sup>969</sup> The Leopold Diploma had determined Transylvania's status as a separate province of the kingdom of Hungary in 1690, remaining valid until 1848 (*Kontler*, p183). The period of neo-absolutism known as the Bach era (named after the imperial Minister of the Interior), which began after the 1848 Revolution had been crushed preserved the separate administration for Transylvania (*Kontler*, p265). Once he had been crowned King of Hungary on 8th June 1867, Franz Joseph re-enacted the 1848 Constitution, which had proclaimed the reunion of Hungary and Transylvania (*Kontler*, pp249 and 279).

<sup>970</sup> Farkas Bolyai (1775-1856) taught mathematics, physics and chemistry at the Calvinist college in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* from 1801 until his retirement in 1851. His son, János Bolyai (1802-1860) was a child prodigy, whose talents outstripped even those of his father and is considered one of the most original mathematicians of all time. See Samu Benkő, *Csillag a magyar tudomány egén: Bolyai János*, in Gyöngy Kovács Kiss, *op.cit.*, pp109-114.

<sup>971</sup> Apáczai Csere (1625-1659) was awarded his doctorate in theology in the Netherlands, returning to *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* in 1653. His Hungarian Encyclopaedia was published in the same year. His inaugural speech in *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia, De studio sapientiae* (also 1653) deplored cultural backwardness and called for a new education system to be introduced (Cf. *Kontler*, p159).

<sup>972</sup> Mihail Eminescu (1850-1889) is considered to be the greatest Romanian poet (*Castellan*, p150). See also *Ofetea*, p474.



The manifestation of the Transylvanian idea politically had gone through many vicissitudes and ordeals. Since Transylvania had been placed under Romanian rule the ancient homeland of liberalism had been afflicted by a virulent strain of nationalism. The Hungarians had been particularly hard hit not merely because they had been toppled from power, but also because in spite of having an independent set of cultural and religious institutions at their disposal, Budapest had been the source of their supply of lifeblood economically, politically and culturally. With sustenance from Hungary cut off the minority was forced to cope with the onslaught of a policy of assimilation from Bucharest.

In the most desperate hour the Transylvania idea, the separate Transylvanian soul became the minority's comfort and salvation. Even though all else had been lost, the ancient Transylvanian lands remained:

"It [the Transylvanian soul] beheld the contours of our mountains, our forests as the man who has got lost in the darkness of the night storm first finds his bearings from the outline of the mountains gradually taking shape against the greying horizon. A mystical power radiates from the land of our birth, which we obviously only sense in our times of great crisis. It is at times like this that we become aware of the intimate community we share with the land we were born in and to which fate has tied us. And if this land has survived, if nothing has changed in the edifices formed by our cliffs and mountains, if our waters continue to flow, our forests rustle and the shepherd still takes his ewes to graze then we too must go on living because we and the land are one. The storm has passed, rays of sunlight pierce through the clouds".<sup>973</sup> Here what we encounter is a statement of an alternative material identity to traditional Hungarianness.

Transylvanian lyric verse was the poetry of nature and nature the first element the Transylvanian idea perceived itself in. Its further components, memory, tradition, the past and the life of the people, shone through in prose works and explained their predilection for historical and rustic narratives. The people of the region, the Székelys in particular, were a living archive, the repository in flesh of a thousand years of tribal existence, of legend and superstition and as such a magnet for authors. The final area in which the Transylvanian idea found expression was in examining the problems of the present day from a consciously Transylvanian vantage point, sifting

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<sup>973</sup> Kuncz, *op. cit.*

through the concepts that had directed the region's fate through its historical development with a view to pinpointing those, which were eternally valid.

Thus a separate Transylvanian identity and consciousness had solidified alongside the literary endeavours. Two institutions were needed in order to safeguard the healthy development of literary policy: an independent journal and an independent publishing house with both financial and readership backing, both of which now were now in place with the *Szépmíves Céh* and *Helikon*.

The romantic pathos and vivid descriptions of the landscape became hallmarks of the Transylvanianist writings, which were an experiment in redefining Hungarian identity, to recast the principle of classification in such a way as to accommodate both an acknowledgement of material difference and the realities of Romanian citizenship. Transylvanianist representations of the Hungarians focused identity firmly within the regional borders, emphasising the firm friendship and community of interest with the Romanians and Saxons, which stretched back over hundreds of years and could serve as a model for improving relations between minority and majority in the present. The Transylvanianist historian Miklós Asztalos<sup>974</sup> stressed the importance of historical awareness and pondered the duty of historical researchers, rejecting the irredentist frame of mind with its talk of historical rights so beloved of official Hungary:

"...there is a need for a kind of historiography, which brings to light the thousands of factors defining the internal, unchangeable way of life belonging to hybrid societies, which have developed here and there in the course of the centuries and not a historiography, which is preoccupied with historical rights. *Minority historiography can only build understanding, not partitioning walls!* From the minority standpoint it can only serve the purpose of legitimate defence in relation to the state, but never attack".<sup>975</sup>

In 1929 Károly Kós published a sketch of Transylvania's cultural history, which remains one of the most important representations of the Transylvanianist ideal of identity and is therefore worth considering at length. Its positive image of the region

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<sup>974</sup> Asztalos (1899-1986) obtained his doctorate at the University of Pécs in 1922. Working in the Hungarian National Library and as a government expert on minorities, he produced several important works on Transylvanian and Hungarian history.

<sup>975</sup> Miklós Asztalos: *A kisebbségi történetírás feladatai és módszere*. In: *Magyar Kisebbség*, 1927. Quoted (without page reference) in Pomogáts, *op. cit.*, p88. Emphasis in original.

portrayed it as a crossroads and a meeting place between nations, a hospitable shelter for the refugee:

"From a geographical point of view Transylvania is a unit because mountain ranges markedly border its upland region, which is enclosed from the West by the Great Hungarian Plain, from the North by the Bukovina Basin dropping down into the Dneister Valley, from the Northeast and East by the Moldovan and from the Southeast and South by the Wallachian Lowlands (the deep lowlands of the Lower Danube), surrounded on every side therefore by deep expanses of lowland. The inside of the Transylvanian Basin, which apart from the *Mezőség/Cimpia Transilvaniei* only comprises the lower valleys of the *Maros/Mureș*, *Szamos/Someșu* and the *Küküllő/Tirnava* rivers lies on average 300-400 metres above sea level, whilst the bulk of the remaining cultivable areas are on average 500 metres above sea level whereas the Great Hungarian Plain and the Wallachian Lowlands average height above sea level is a mere 100 metres and the river valleys of Moldova and Bukovina do not exceed a height of 200 metres above sea level.

This closed and high location predestined this land to be a distinct economic unit as well.

History proves however that Transylvania was a doorstep marking the threshold between East and West over which every cultural current surging from West to East or East to West stumbled willy-nilly and in the process of stumbling had to drop something of itself here. Since time immemorial peoples and faiths, races and cultures have blended in this land, where peoples advancing from any direction, anywhere on Europe's perpetually bloodthirsty soil, if they collapsed in mortal combat then some of the small band of survivors from the defeated side, bleeding, frightened and seeking a hideout crossed the pass between Hungary and Transylvania and the Eastern Carpathians to the wonderful citadel of its secret, concealed valleys and its vast forests. And if in later times happy coincidence or a new misfortune meant that any people had to leave this land some trace of them always remained.

This natural and irrevocable aptitude of Transylvania predestined it, even against human will, to the cultural character of the peoples of this land and to difference from all neighbouring cultures".<sup>976</sup>

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<sup>976</sup> Károly Kós: *Erdély. Kultúrtörténeti vázlat*. Erdélyi Szépművészeti Céh, Kolozsvár, 1934 edition, p7.

On arriving in Transylvania the Hungarian tribes found a sparse, mixed population speaking a wide range of languages including what was to evolve into Romanian:

"The primitive life of a primitive society was carried on in the territory of Transylvania. The only more important and carefully organised and supervised state activity here was salt and ore mining. Agriculture was quite rudimentary, livestock breeding consisted of primitive ewe and goat herding. Any civilisation, social activity or shared cultural consciousness in any higher sense of the word could hardly have roots here. Everything from which independent and state life, political consciousness and shared will in pursuit of important objectives could have sprung was present only in embryonic form. But the possibility of a uniform and national culture was also present in embryonic form in the Greek-Christian religion accepted from Byzantine hands, in the Eastern Church and the uniform Romanian language in the making. The occupying Hungarians by contrast categorically represented a superior culture and civilisation. Because even if they did not bring ready-made cultural attainments with them on horseback and in their covered wagons they did bring with them memories of the former Khazar empire, its erudition and its broad knowledge of the world. [...]

The Hungarians therefore did not bring ready-made cultural attainments to their new home, but a state of preparedness, which made them capable of calling culture to life and in the circumstances of organising and governing the territory and people they had conquered correctly according to their way of thinking".<sup>977</sup>

Having been moulded by the Hungarians, Transylvania from the days of Saint István became the site of the clash between East and West. By the end of the 16th century, it was a flourishing multicultural society:

"The three autonomous political nations of Transylvania and the non-political, but ethnic Romanian nation lived their separate lives within their groups therefore: they constructed their own social and cultural edifices separately neither mingling nor disturbing each other, rarely getting in each other's way, yet communicating with each other, learning from each other and influencing each other".<sup>978</sup>

By the 17th century the Székely-Hungarians, the Romanians and the Saxons had come closer together in spite of their differing traditions:

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<sup>977</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp16-17.

<sup>978</sup> *Op. cit.*, p64.

"But these in many respects radically different cultures, instilled into the souls of different races and of different origin were marked with the consolidating stamp of centuries of constantly living together, of contact, a shared fate, shared joys and woes and shared spiritual experiences, which had become ever more apparent during the democratic broadening of intellectual life in principality era and the era of popular deepening. This process of internal consolidation was likewise strengthened in this period by the uniform current, which affected all three Transylvanian peoples and cultures in the same way, which brought the Asian way of life, mentality, world view, philosophy and artistic culture flooding into Transylvania via the neighbouring Turks and in so doing enriched the consolidating unity of the three races and the shared Transylvanian characteristics of the three cultures".<sup>979</sup>

For a thousand years three peoples and three cultures had existed side by side retaining the individuality that distinguished each from the other, yet displaying characteristics that set them apart from all other foreign and related peoples and cultures:

"A thousand years is a long time even in the life of peoples and cultures, but during a thousand years on Transylvanian soil not one people or culture could or indeed wished to transmute the other into its own image. Outside powers sometimes tried to do this at the cost of immense sacrifices, but with meagre results and no success ultimately. On the other hand the three cohabiting cultures had an unconscious and never entirely extinct aspiration whilst keeping their ethnic nature intact, to adopt communities, which in spite of their separate realities made them typically Transylvanian. The Transylvanian Hungarian people is different from the Hungarian; the Transylvanian Saxons are different from the Germans in Germany and the Transylvanian Romanians are different from those of the Regat; they are different physically, but all the more so mentally. And if the Romanians stayed Romanian, the Saxons German and the Hungarians and Székelys Hungarian they and their every manifestation of culture are alongside their differences also characterised by the community, which aside from the irrevocable and eternal natural attributes was determined by shared fate, and the shared forms of the struggles fought together in life. This community manifesting itself is the particular Transylvanian psyche, which

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<sup>979</sup> *Op. cit.*, p69.

the sister nations of any of the Transylvanian peoples living beyond the region's frontiers has not been and will never be able to understand.

As to the course the peoples and cultures of Transylvania will follow in future this will depend to a large extent on the peoples of Transylvania themselves. History has proven that Transylvania belongs to the peoples who take this fate and this psyche upon themselves and it will belong to those in the future who make the same commitment. Transylvania's lot was at its happiest and its culture blossomed most richly and completely when its peoples with one will embraced the distinct Transylvanian fate and built it with their distinct Transylvanian intelligence".<sup>980</sup>

Geographical boundedness, features of the landscape and the historical experience of living side by side had forged a separate material identity amongst the Hungarian, Saxon and Romanian populations. Encouraging greater awareness of this could only increase mutual understanding and tolerance.

## 2.9 The Young Transylvanian (*Erdélyi Fiatalok*) Movement

1930 marked the inception of the Young Transylvanian (*Erdélyi Fiatalok*) movement with a periodical of the same name edited by Béla Jancsó<sup>981</sup> and Dezső László.<sup>982</sup> It aspired to include the rural population in the project of preserving and developing Hungarian identity and carried out valuable studies of life in the Hungarian villages (for example Imre Mikó's *The Transylvanian Village and the Nationality Issue* from 1932).<sup>983</sup>

Since László's chief concerns were how to reconcile *anyaország* with Transylvanian identity and clarifying the relationship between them in the prevailing political circumstances, his deliberations will also be examined in depth. Although staunchly

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<sup>980</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp87-88.

<sup>981</sup> Jancsó (1903-1967) studied medicine in Kolozsvár and was a regular contributor to the newspapers *Ellenzék* and *Újság* as well as writing essays for *Nyugat*.

<sup>982</sup> Protestant theologian László (1904-1973) studied briefly at Glasgow University before returning to Transylvania to edit *Erdélyi Fiatalok*. On his significance as a writer and thinker, see Péter Cseke's preface to his *A kisebbségi élet ajándékai. Publicisztikai írások, tanulmányok, 1929-1940*, Minerva Művelődési Egyesület és a Szabadság napilap kiadója, Kolozsvár, 1997, pp3-14.

<sup>983</sup> *Az erdélyi falu és a nemzetiségi kérdés*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998. See Mikó, pp188-189 and Pomogáts, *op. cit.*, pp195-196.

Transylvanianist, his representations were not as Utopian as those of Kós and the *Helikon* collective:

"We have to acknowledge that Transylvanian soil possesses some kind of power that influences the peoples who live here in a special way. Anyone who fails to notice the difference that exists between Hungarians living in Transylvania and those who live elsewhere is devoid of a feeling heart, an open eye, a sense of history and a thoughtful mind. Anyone who has spent any time amongst the Romanians will have immediately noticed the difference between the Transylvanians and the Wallachians. It is also beyond doubt that there are differences between the Transylvanian Saxons and the Germans of the Reich. We have to acknowledge that the different geographical and climatic conditions, the different economic situation, the development of a characteristic political and social situation, the historical struggles, interest groupings and balance of power are factors, which leave their mark on those who live under their influence. No one can shake off this influence. If we term the aggregate and resultant of these influences the force we regard as the Transylvanian mentality or soul then we must recognise as a fact that there is such a thing as a Transylvanian mentality or soul. This is, however, not a Hungarian racial peculiarity, but a universal manifestation of Life exercising an influence over all the peoples who live in Transylvania".<sup>984</sup>

Thus the Hungarians are materially different from their *anyaországi* brethren.

However, László does not sever the ties between the separate Hungarian communities altogether:

"From the above it clearly emerges that we cannot call this force operating in Transylvania a soul, but we can call it a mentality. We maintain that there is a Transylvanian mindset that influences and moulds one aspect of the ethnic soul of the Hungarians as a whole [in other words the *anyaországiak* and all other Hungarians scattered throughout the successor states], but this Transylvanian mentality does not just influence the Hungarian ethnic soul, but that of the Romanians and Saxons as well. The Transylvanian mentality is but one of the active intellectual influences, which have an impact on certain branches of the Hungarians as a whole to a greater extent and other branches to a lesser extent. There is no such thing as a Transylvanian Hungarian soul, there is only one Hungarian soul, that of all Hungarians. There is a

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<sup>984</sup> Dezső László, *Az erdélyi szellem (The Transylvanian Mentality)*, 1929. In László, *op.cit.*, pp72-3.

Transylvanian mentality, which can be either a Transylvanian Hungarian, Transylvanian Romanian or a Transylvanian Saxon mentality depending on the relationship to and influence of which particular ethnic soul we happen to be looking at in the same way as there is Hungarian Protestantism, German Protestantism, etc." <sup>985</sup>

Acknowledging this reality was the most rational course of action in the circumstances:

"With the peace settlement at Trianon we have been severed from the body of the Hungarians as a whole politically, economically and also to a degree intellectually. We have ended up in different political and economic circumstances. These segregating factors urgently called for a new Transylvanian Hungarian mindset to be found. Contemporary Hungary's ideology, its general mentality, is not suitable today; indeed it would represent a downright dangerous intellectual climate for the Hungarians of Transylvania. On the one hand, living our lives in accordance with the precepts of the national ideology prevalent in Hungary today would bring us into eternal conflict with the authorities whilst on the other we would be accepting an ideology unable to satisfy the vital interests of the Hungarians of Transylvania. The primary cohesive forces holding peoples together are intellectual. If these intellectual forces do not serve these vital interests then decay sets in". <sup>986</sup>

László fully grasped the role played by culture and history as the stuff of which collective identities are made:

"The most important pillar of the Transylvanian Hungarian mentality is the link with historical traditions. Transylvania is a historical land and also enjoys the attribute of being able to give account of its entire past via these traditions. Could there be a healthier mentality for us in the shifting circumstances of today than this spirit of admiration for historical traditions? The 150 years of the independent Transylvanian Principality were the formative years and the golden age of the Transylvanian mentality. During that period "Hungarian" was virtually synonymous with "Transylvanian". The self-preservation instinct that swept the Hungarians of Transylvania back to this original source cannot be incorrect. The Transylvanian

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<sup>985</sup> *Op.cit.*, p73.

<sup>986</sup> László, *op.cit.*, pp73-4.



mentality is that of ethnic and religious tolerance<sup>987</sup> [...]. The typical trait peculiar to the Transylvanian mentality is the confidence placed in intellectual forces. The Transylvanian was never able to become rich enough to be materialistic and never lived peacefully enough to indulge in sport as a leisure activity. Now, in the days of being squeezed financially and in terms of external success we can take first place and be strong through immersion in and consolidation of the intellectual. In this respect as well the Transylvanian mentality is a gift from God to the Hungarians of Transylvania".<sup>988</sup>

Although he saw the Transylvanian and *anyaországi* identities as distinct, László saw no advantage in denying their interdependence:

"We must bear witness that the Hungarians collectively form *one* single spiritual body and *one* spiritual and *one* cultural community and organism even today [...].

We make up various parts of the Hungarian spiritual body. Without us the body cannot live, but our prospects of living without the entire body are even less. On the one hand we must have a clear picture of our own particular role within the Hungarian spiritual organism as a complete entity. What the soul of the Hungarians expects of us is that we counterbalance other opposing intellectual influences. Our Transylvanian Hungarian mentality is not just suitable for ensuring our survival, but we must also permit it to have an effect on all other Hungarians. If it does not mesh with the Hungarian soul in its entirety it will remain incomplete. Important demands relevant to everyday life will go unfulfilled. On the other hand, however, we must stay in permanent and close contact with all other Hungarians in order to be truly able to withstand the temptations concealed within Transylvanianism, which I touched upon earlier.<sup>989</sup> We do not lend credence to the statement according to which the Hungarians of Transylvania are capable of an independent *Hungarian* life without the

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<sup>987</sup> Already in 1568 the Transylvanian Diet at *Torda/Turda* passed a decree placing the Unitarian faith on an equal footing with the *recepta religio* or „established” denominations (Catholic, Lutheran and Calvinist). During the reign of István Báthori (1533-1586), Prince of Transylvania, the Orthodox Church was granted the right to elect metropolitan bishops.

<sup>988</sup> *Op. cit.*, p74.

<sup>989</sup> These were undermining national unity amongst the Hungarian minority by propagating Transylvanianism, driving a wedge between the Transylvanian Hungarians and their counterparts elsewhere and becoming overly parochial in outlook as a by-product of having become a big fish in a small pond whether in literature or other fields of creative activity. *Op. cit.*, pp74-75.

spiritual influence of all Hungarians living elsewhere. Putting this principle into practice would fraught with serious risks. Since the partitioning, Hungarian culture has surged ahead and Hungarians have undergone major advances economically and socially [...]. As far as we are concerned if we were to break ourselves off from this developing Hungarian spiritual life and if we were to fail to foster the relationship within the legally authorised framework it would mean retrogression, a narrowing of horizons and painful backwardness".<sup>990</sup>

In *The Gifts of Minority Life* from 1931, László was eager to highlight the positive aspects of the Hungarians' new status:

"Every day we hear a great deal about how life as a minority is a curse, onerous indigence and a slippery slope leading to death for the Hungarian nation. Speaking about the Hungarian minority is the same as speaking about a heap of injustices, recounting acts of aggressive intervention. These pronouncements are entirely true. The fate of belonging to a minority can indeed mean being dispersed and torn apart as a people, gradual decline and ultimately death. Minority fate will only lead to this magnificent death if and when the people relegated to minority existence can envisage no other outcome but death, if they prove incapable of mustering the strength to sustain themselves under the new circumstances.

The fate of the Hungarian minority will hinge on whether it recognises itself, its lot and its destiny in the mirror of Death or the mirror of Life.

I would venture to say that the branches of the Hungarian tree destined for the lot of a minority are richly laden with ripe fruits.

It is true that talking about these fruits is somewhat of a thankless task. The Hungarian who can perceive life, an enchanting future and opportunities to live life freely even in such conditions where officially only mourning and weeping are accepted is branded as a bad, as an opportunist".<sup>991</sup>

On the contrary the Hungarian who refused to imagine that there could be anything positive to salvage was myopic and suicidal. History, language and culture forged all Hungarians together and the greatest threat to Hungarian life derived from the infinite variety of influences with the potential to shatter the nation's spiritual unity. Amongst

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<sup>990</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp75-76. Emphasis in original.

<sup>991</sup> Dezső László, *A kisebbségi élet ajándékai*, 1931, *op. cit.* p77.

these the most powerful centred on the issue of how the minorities were supposed to retain their Hungarian identity whilst cut off from free interaction with mainstream Hungarian culture. It was as damaging to refuse to consider new paths towards maintaining unity as it was to fail to recognise the real danger of unity crumbling. That political unity had been torn apart and that cultural relations had been partially paralysed did not mean that the racial unity of Hungarians [*anyaországi* and minorities] or the community of fate they shared had disintegrated. True separation would only occur if the various pockets of Hungarians scattered throughout different states were to neglect becoming genuinely acquainted with one another. Indeed the *anyaországiak* had been misled as to the fate of the Hungarians living as minorities. If spiritual Hungarian unity were really a jealously guarded treasure then the body made up of Hungarians everywhere would have to keep a close watch on the fruits cultivated by the minorities to feed all Hungarians.<sup>992</sup>

The way ahead would involve a flexible reaction to the constant stream of new influences on the part of all Hungarians. In trying to salvage some hope for the future, László emphasised that political changes alone could not eradicate the materiality of Hungarian identity:

"Hungarians living in minorities have not only been torn away from the body of the Hungarian state, but they have also been transplanted on to the body of a new country lead by another race and lo and behold they are still alive nevertheless, since their souls have awakened and they are looking for a path that will make it possible for them to remain Hungarian, to become aware of the community of fate and spirit within the compass of another state. I admit that life in an independent country governed by its own kind affords the most complete external opportunity for a race to develop, but minority Hungarian fate presents the heartening fact to all Hungarians that such primordial natural forces slumbered in the Hungarian soul that when they stirred, even in a foreign land, they were capable of persisting and guaranteeing existence. (...) The first great gift of minority Hungarian life is (...) the rematerialization of and return to the roots of Hungarian life and its primary facts. The place once occupied by external political unity has to be filled by the unity of ancient Hungarian bedrock, racial and spiritual unity. Today the true Hungarian is he who revises his entire world and is not afraid to return to the roots of his fate. The

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<sup>992</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp77-78.

real Hungarian builders of today gaze into the depths, at the roots, at the ancient Hungarian bedrock. They look for the peculiar features, values and misfortunes of the Hungarians. In this quest and its fulfilment every Hungarian must be as one.

Political Hungarian unity has been rent apart. In its place *spiritual* Hungarian unity must be created. This unity is more everlasting, profound, self-contained, purer, in other words more living than external political unity".<sup>993</sup>

Unity did not automatically preclude different shades of outlook within Hungarian intellectual life, but set in motion a search for specific Hungarian values in a process of self-discovery. Every Hungarian should be what he was, a true, living Hungarian. This would suffice to forge unity. The advantage of being an *anyaországi* was that of living in a country where citizens of non-Hungarian race wanted to be Hungarian. The opposite was true of the situation faced by the minorities: being Hungarian meant stuntedness and an open wound. In this respect the minority Hungarians were more Hungarian since they had to make sacrifices in order to remain what they were, they consciously embraced the consequences of their choice. László's argument that they did not have the luxury of being continually reminded of who they were plainly shows that he was fully cognisant of the role of symbols in the maintenance of collective identities:

"In the life of every race and nation, symbols expressing their peculiar essence are of enormous significance. National sentiment and self-awareness themselves produce symbols expressing their own essence in order to safeguard and further enrich their own identity. These symbols, like mirrors, constantly draw the attention of peoples to themselves. Hungarian stamps smile at the Budapest schoolboy from letters and parcels, he sees "patriotic" inscriptions on the side of tram coaches, the Hungarian coat of arms greets him from the top of the school gate, he can sing the Hungarian anthem when he pleases, he can practice the Hungarian language, he can see the many hundred creations of Hungarian political life in buildings, statues, institutions, people, in spoken words and in writing. He is surrounded on all sides by Hungarian symbols, which remind him of his Hungarianness. There is a danger to all these external symbols, that their beholder looks upon his Hungarian fate as being very much guaranteed, very mighty from the outside, he grows very accustomed to them and does not look for deeper roots, more ancient and viable symbols. Very few external

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<sup>993</sup> *Op. cit.*, p79. Emphasis in original.

Hungarian symbols remain for the minority Hungarians. In their political life there are barely a handful of symbols: the Hungarian political parties and the Hungarian political newspapers. In the eyes of the minority Hungarians the national culture, the national language are far more significant and living symbols than they are to the majority Hungarians. A Transylvanian Hungarian song festival has a more captivating effect than any song festival in Budapest. Transylvania has a greater affection for the fruits of Hungarian literature and wider segments of its population consume them than is true of the Great Plain. Today the language is the "final refuge" for us: Széchenyi was right; the nation does live in its language. [...]

The great danger for minority Hungarians might well be that they cannot within the permitted legal framework they respect and abide by erect for themselves spiritual symbols of sufficiently persuasive power to counterbalance the power radiating from the symbols of other races".<sup>994</sup>

The most striking change to the countenance of the Hungarian minorities was the greater degree of democracy, which did not mean the rule of the people, but a more organic mutual interdependence, a receding of social restrictions into the background, collaboration across the class divides for the benefit of all and banding together to work as a team. In a nutshell: a healthier, more fertile and more genuine Hungarian community. In Transylvania the Hungarian aristocracy of birth, wealth and office had not been destroyed altogether, but its influence had been reduced to a minimum due to unfavourable circumstances such as the impact of the agricultural reform. Hungarian capital had likewise lost its independence and politically all the leading posts had been transferred to Romanian hands. As a result, the role to be played by the middle classes and ordinary Hungarians had grown enormously in importance. At the same time the middle class had been plunged into a crisis more severe than that faced by their social superiors. At least one third of middle-class civil servants had emigrated, another third had found alternative employment in industry or commerce or retired whilst the remainder had stayed on. A huge gap had opened up demographically with nobody between the ages of 26 and 42 left behind because of the effects of the war. Traditionally the Transylvanian middle-classes had earned a livelihood working for the state, but the carpet had been pulled out from under their feet. It would have to coalesce with the manual labourers. The better-off artisans and retailers of the towns

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<sup>994</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp80-81.

and the owners of dwarf holdings in the villages had been suddenly thrust into a leadership position to compensate from below the losses suffered at the top. Talent could no longer be squandered. Democratisation amongst the minorities had also been stimulated by the fact that life in the successor states was more democratic than in Hungary.<sup>995</sup> Here László shows that, for minorities in particular, one of the most significant effects of national principle of classification is to encourage internal solidarity through emphasising innate similarity.

Four years later, László once again analysed the fundamental issues of life as a minority. Debate on the subject of certain aspects of minority life had in his opinion been based on a false premise: that of using the situation of the *anyaországiai* as a yardstick for comparisons. This had resulted in three erroneous standpoints, the conservative, the critical and the pessimistic. The first involved a complete refusal to recognise that minority life was radically different to what had gone before and therefore placed different demands on the Hungarians. Its adherents daydreamed of being able to retain the old forms of Hungarian life, its institutions and esprit intact and deemed minority life a success only in so far as it perpetuated the old world within the new. The second was the exact opposite of this, according to which a critical attitude, blaming the Hungarians for the collapse that had followed the war was quite natural amongst the minority. The third had reached the verdict that Hungarian minorities had no future. Since they felt that even majority Hungarians could not guarantee an existence for themselves the days of the minorities were numbered. All three were tired and sterile anachronisms, however, after 15 years had elapsed. It was not possible to live through a new era with the instruments and spirit of an outmoded age:

"We can arrive at a true way of looking at minority life first and foremost by ascertaining our minority existence not by comparing ourselves with the majority Hungarians, but with the *majority Romanians* who live around us. We are not minority Hungarians because we are live in separation from majority Hungarians, but because in our country we are in a minority compared with the 15 million Romanians who form the state. The fundamental issues of our minority life are therefore decided in our relationship with the Romanians. To begin with we must become acquainted

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<sup>995</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp81-82.

with the life, system and opportunities of this country. It is amazing to see what serious omissions continue to weigh us down in this area. I am convinced that much of our backwardness can be traced back to our not knowing this country well enough and the roads we can and must follow and respect in living our lives here. It is above all knowledge of our country's constitution that convinces me that minority life is a constitutionally guaranteed form of life here. We are not simply tolerated, but fully-fledged citizens of this country, every behaviour, which infringes the exercise of our civic rights runs counter to the constitution and the laws of the land. We do not have to refer to what the fate of the Romanians in old Hungary was like or what the fate of the minorities in other countries is if we are being obstructed in asserting our national characteristics, but to the fact that those who are committing an injustice against us do not respect the laws of this country whereas we may expect that the laws concerning us be enforced since we discharge all our duties. Which one of us does not pay taxes, does not perform his military service, does not respect the ruler and the entire state system? From this conduct the Romanians will also see that we really do recognise the legal situation we have been living in since the peace treaty was signed. We must convince the state-forming race that we do not have any hidden objectives, we must demonstrate what the country's leaders hardly see, namely that in every aspect of our public life we wish to advance whilst completely respecting the law. [...] We must accumulate enough moral capital on the basis of our respect towards the state to be able to pinpoint it at any juncture with perfect confidence".<sup>996</sup>

The first matter for the minority to clarify within its own ranks was why it did not wish to assimilate into the Romanian race. The right to preserve Hungarianness was defended by the peace treaty and the constitution alike. The Romanian political parties read irredentism and agitation against the territorial integrity of the state into the minority's desire to stand up for its rights, which could not be further from the truth. The actual reason for the insistence on staying in the same racial, religious and cultural community was that it provided the natural definition for the life of the Hungarians.

The agenda for the minority was to familiarise itself with the national values it was born with and to protect and evolve them in a country governed by another race. The

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<sup>996</sup> *Kisebbségi életünk alapkérdései*, 1935. *Op. cit.*, pp88-90, quote, pp89-90. Emphasis in the original.

values in question were language, folk and literary culture, the unique world view and moral forms founded in the national past and above these the Christian values honed by the church. None of these activities was incompatible with the law.

The environment in which culture exists defines its contours. The situation of a minority defined its culture. From this it followed that the cultural tasks to be fulfilled by the minority could not be a carbon copy of those to be dealt with in Hungary.<sup>997</sup>

History had shown that values can only be defended and developed further with a corresponding financial base. The Romanian state had to provide support in these efforts and by turning to it for assistance the minority proved that it did not aspire to be a state within a state, but a cultural and religious minority community. Beyond the aid that had already been applied for the law made available other as yet neglected opportunities such as resources for Székely cultural autonomy.<sup>998</sup>

Sadly, László was wrong to assume that the discrepancy between material and functional identity could be overcome by living quietly as law-abiding citizens. For successive Romanian governments, no amount of protestations of loyalty could ever suffice to persuade them to abandon their assimilationist policies.

## 2.10 Revising Ourselves: Sándor Makkai

The career of another member of the Transylvanianist circle, the reformist bishop Sándor Makkai,<sup>999</sup> illustrates further the cultural limitations placed upon members of the minority. Contrasting the content of the representations he wrote whilst he lived in Romania with those produced in Hungary is particularly instructive in this respect.

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<sup>997</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp90-91.

<sup>998</sup> *Op. cit.*, p92.

<sup>999</sup> Makkai (1890-1951) tirelessly campaigned for the educational, literary and cultural improvement of the Hungarian minority. Eventually drained by the demands the struggle placed upon him, he moved back to Hungary in 1936 to teach at the University of Debrecen. For more detailed biographical information, see Károly Fekete's preface to *Magunk revíziója*, reprinted by Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 1998 (henceforth *Makkai 1931*), pp5-44. The original was first published by the Erdélyi Szépművés Céh in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*.



Again, Makkai was a figure of sufficient prominence in Transylvanian literary life to warrant examination in-depth.

In *Revising Ourselves* (*Magunk revíziója*) from 1931,<sup>1000</sup> Makkai analysed the predicament the Hungarians found themselves in and prescribed an appropriate remedy. He begins by citing the biblical example of Nathaniel<sup>1001</sup> to illustrate the nature of prejudice, how it focuses the mind on insignificant details, blinding those who have succumbed to it with its prior judgements. Creativity, of the literary or scientific variety, has to overcome prejudice, proving itself before its merits gain acceptance, but it is in politics and social life that prejudices are rife, chauvinism and majority views of minorities being cases in point. Although life is dynamic and change constant, prejudice is static and resistant to modification. Against this backdrop, concepts, convictions and attitudes gradually become obsolete if they do not keep pace with developments and it is precisely this failure to revise hallowed notions that lies at the root of prejudice. Obstinate clinging to outmoded ideas was tantamount to a death sentence in the context of assessing the situation and tasks to be accomplished as a minority. Self-revision, engaging in a constructive reappraisal, was therefore a solemn duty for the benefit of individual and society alike.<sup>1002</sup>

Although prejudice, with its insistence on the permanence of attributes, could be described as a form of self-defence, it was always essentially sterile and counterproductive, demanding neither effort nor sacrifices. In certain eras the temptation to seek consolation in prejudice was greater than in others and the catastrophe of war enveloping the entire world had called all previous assumptions into question. The future of humanity depended on whether revision triumphed. Far from entailing a radical jettisoning of familiar ideas and principles from the past, revision involved a return to them, bringing their content into line with the facts and thereby breathing new life into them. Recognising and willingly submitting to the imperatives born of the facts should not be confused with culpable compromise, but looked upon positively as a rejection of prejudice and hence of atrophy and ultimate demise.<sup>1003</sup>

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<sup>1000</sup> For Mikó's response to the work, see *Mikó*, p163-4.

<sup>1001</sup> Gospel of Saint John, Chapter 1, verses 46 to 51.

<sup>1002</sup> *Makkai 1931*, pp46-51.

<sup>1003</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp50-55.

The twelve years that had elapsed since the Hungarians had come under Romanian rule ought to have sufficed to convince them that revision was ineluctable, that refusing both to forget and to learn far from representing the most effective form of self-defence meant little more than succumbing to prejudice. Harsh reality called for a more constructive approach:

"We have become citizens of Romania; the contours of our lives have been defined by the laws and due legal order of this country. We must retain our Hungarianness within the framework of this order, integrating into it, not against others, but in the interests of the peaceful and industrious assertion of our inherited spiritual and intellectual individuality.

*We must confront the facts*, but it is indisputable that this exercise demands the revision of fundamental concepts and convictions more specifically first and foremost of those pertaining to the past. *The first and most important task of the Hungarians of Transylvania is to revise the perception of the past in such a way as to preclude prejudices inimical to life and to establish healthy forms of self-defence and self-affirmation*".<sup>1004</sup>

Makkai goes on to dissect the prejudices concerning the past as revealed in the attitudes of two opposing schools of thought. The first idealises the era in which the Hungarians of his generation were born grew up in as perfect, unclouded, as the most glorious phase of Hungarian history, happy times of thriving culture, prosperity, power and self-confidence.<sup>1005</sup> Everyone who drew attention to problems and errors, who made disquieting predictions about malevolent eddies beneath the calm, radiant surface, was driven by the frustration of ungratified vanity and selfishness and was in the final analysis an enemy of the Hungarian nation, whose strength had matured to such an extent that it was on the verge of achieving dominion over its own lands and of assuring a blissful future for itself. The dream of 30 million Hungarians, the vision of culture imparting Hungarianness to everyone and everything had been hovering tantalisingly on the horizon. In those days there had been no such thing as oppression, injustice and destitution. The gleaming Hungarian traits of adherence to the law, truth, chivalry and honesty held sway in the government, the public administration, culture and education. Evil foes, such as the Social-Democrat

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<sup>1004</sup> *Op. cit.*, p57-58, emphasis in original.

<sup>1005</sup> In this passage Makkai is of course referring to the Hungarians as a whole.

workers for example, did their utmost to bring ruin upon the nation with their constant whingeing about exploitation, penury and a plethora of other woes. Then there had been Austria, cutting the Hungarians off from the rest of the world in a sullen display of envy so that they would be misunderstood or completely unknown. None of this was the product of mistakes committed by the Hungarians. Instead it was the result of intrigue and abuse of the generous kindness Hungarians were so thoroughly imbued with. A nation such as the Hungarians deserved the recognition, admiration, friendship and support of the world rather than the lot apportioned to it, which was the single greatest injustice in all of human history. Its causes cannot be traced back to the life, soul or character of the Hungarians and must of necessity come from the outside.

As Makkai concludes, this argument sloughs off of all responsibility for what happened, with the Hungarians as innocent victims waiting for the miracle that will vindicate them and restore to them what was lost. In the minds of those who placed their faith in this doctrine, the uncomfortable and unpalatable realities of the present were temporary in nature and there was no reason to learn from them or change strategy because of them.<sup>1006</sup>

Makkai describes passively enduring until the yearned for miracle ensued as the most depressing prejudice. Facts had superseded the proud, smug, pristine core of national consciousness. The past had irrevocably slipped through the fingers and hence could not be resurrected. The injustice, no matter how great, had taken place. Two options presented themselves: the Hungarians of Transylvania could either wallow in prejudice with all the concomitant risks for their survival or they could accept the facts and adapt accordingly.<sup>1007</sup>

The second way of looking back over the past was far less romanticised. Dubbing it an accumulation of fatal errors and misapprehensions, this perspective disqualified history as a reliable source of lessons given that the blind chauvinism of every nation always vaunts its own achievements through the chronicles of the past. All of the glories history extols are superficial, consigned to the realm of appearances, externalities. Even the most radiant period had amounted to nothing more than the tyranny of the powerful, the delights of the surface concealing the putrefaction of

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<sup>1006</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp58-59.

<sup>1007</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp60-61.

corruption and oppression underneath. The nefarious lack of concern so typical of the Hungarian past had paved the way for the catastrophe that had struck. Both patriotism and the national consciousness had consisted of little more than tired, hollow phrases and slogans. Unemployment, emigration, indebtedness, the gradual demise of productive labour and the slow takeover of culture and the economy by foreigners had been the true hallmark of the age of Hungarian strength. That power and leadership had ended up being concentrated in the hands of a single class, which was not the repository of moral and intellectual vigour, proved disastrous. Liberalism and democracy had remained mere slogans: in so far as they did actually materialise, however, the Hungarian race had not been able to avail itself of them - the progressive ideals had borne fruit exclusively for outsiders. The conclusion:

"We are therefore suffering for the transgressions of a ruling class and they bear the entire burden of responsibility for everything that has happened. The facts indicate that we do not have to concern ourselves about the past and that we must adapt to the present in such a way as to ensure we can make individual livelihoods for ourselves".<sup>1008</sup>

In Makkai's eyes the only distinction between the two groups is that the latter acknowledges the strictures imposed by the new reality and is willing to adjust. Both are nevertheless equally afflicted by prejudice, overlooking the true message of the facts they struggle to come to terms with, which did not call for individual compromise, but for a healthy and practical expression of national consciousness and fulfilment of the mission in hand.<sup>1009</sup>

Against this backdrop chafing over whether the facts should be regarded as permanent or alterable was nothing but a costly distraction. Renewal and revision could not be made dependent on such external circumstances. National awareness must incorporate acknowledgement of errors and iniquities. Basking in nostalgia and sentimentality must cease and a more critical understanding replace the outmoded, naive idealisation of what had been lost. Although the events that had unfolded had been influenced by considerations outside Hungary, the great disaster had to be apprehended as the result of and punishment for internal mistakes. Continuing to

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<sup>1008</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 60-62; quotation, pp61-62.

<sup>1009</sup> *Op. cit.*, p62.

regard it as an accidental calamity from without would serve only to perpetuate the wrongdoings of the past in a more rigid form:

"We must accept the teaching of the facts to the effect that the great, external occasion presented by the devastation simply disclosed and sealed the fate, which had been ordained by us through our own crimes".<sup>1010</sup>

The Hungarian soul's darker side of bias, arrogance, impetuosity coupled with the Eastern characteristics of somnolent apathy, inertia and selfishness that had already pushed the nation into the background both at home and in international competition had finally taken its toll. The gravest deficit had been the Hungarian inability to submit to intellectual or spiritual leadership, deferring only to the privileges of birth and wealth. Slowly but surely, slavish imitation had become the order of the day, blocking off the only path a small nation could viably proceed along, that of intellectual flexibility, sensitivity, receptiveness, progressiveness and aspiring to universality.<sup>1011</sup>

Denying the past, disassociating oneself with it by insisting on being an innocent victim of the wrongs of others was the most shameful act of cowardice and betrayal, the most abject lie. By contrast:

*"Accepting responsibility, contrition and penitence are the greatest feats with which a nation can prove its right to live and its resourcefulness. Remorse is not a nation's disgrace, but, if it is truly ashamed of its offences and rues them, represents its glory and power".*<sup>1012</sup>

For the abandoned Hungarian minority, which Makkai likens to a drop comprising one and a half million in a vast ocean, this meant more than words alone, battling against its inner demons without turning its back on the past altogether:

"It is as necessary for us to see clearly, free from any trace of prejudice, and to ardently embrace everything of worth, all the life-affirming, enriching, precious and sacred *assets*, which the Hungarian past and the Hungarian soul have produced and continue to represent, which they can point to as their own unique, indispensable and irreplaceable possession in humanity's vast treasure house as it is for us to see clearly

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<sup>1010</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp64-66; quotation, p66.

<sup>1011</sup> *Op. cit.*, p66.

<sup>1012</sup> *Op. cit.*, p67, emphasis in the original.

and self-awaredly the life-denying misdeeds, to condemn them so as to be able to extirpate them from within us".<sup>1013</sup>

Rather than extolling the virtues of the great and glowing achievements of the Hungarian past and erecting richly decorated memorials to them in their souls, the task ahead of the Hungarians was to rediscover and reappraise the truly Hungarian values expressed throughout it in order to weave them subsequently into the fabric of their lives, dealings and futures. The major personalities, movements, institutions, artistic creations and fates of the past provided a rich hoard boasting countless examples of the Hungarian way of thinking, creative energy and specifically Hungarian values. Concentrating on the authentically Hungarian, the national disposition would reveal that the ability to thrive and develop further was as intrinsic to being Hungarian as it was to other peoples. The deep Hungarian attachment to the two fundamental values of justice and good would assure a lasting future on condition that they were consciously nurtured. Both the typical national disasters and heroes that had emerged in the course of history illustrated various aspects of the national character, warts and all. The appalling defeats at battles such as Mohács contrasted with individuals of the calibre of Saint István (exemplifying the Hungarian capacity to work, to organise and build), Béla the Fourth (broadening the intellectual horizons and overcoming prejudices, self-worth),<sup>1014</sup> Gábor Bethlen (self-restraint, patience, self-sacrifice and insuppressibly passion for life)<sup>1015</sup> and István Széchenyi (intellectual

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<sup>1013</sup> *Op. cit.*, p68. Emphasis in original.

<sup>1014</sup> Béla IV (1206-1270) ascended the throne in 1235. At the Battle of Muhi on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1241, he narrowly escaped with his life, his armies having been decimated by the invading Mongols (*Kontler*, pp77-8).

<sup>1015</sup> Gábor Bethlen (1580-1629) was Prince of Transylvania from 1613 until his death. Through his participation in the Thirty Years War, he enhanced the strategic importance of the Principality. When the estates of Bohemia rose up in revolt against the Counter-Reformation, Bethlen grasped his chance to enter into an alliance with the Czech Protestants. In the autumn of 1619 he launched an offensive powerful enough to allow him to advance all the way to Vienna, which he besieged having already conquered Upper Hungary. Although compelled to retreat, the Hungarian Diet proclaimed him King of Hungary (in place of Ferdinand II). Following the defeat inflicted upon the Czechs at the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, he had to abandon his ambitions. At the Peace of Nikolsburg (1621), he gave up the royal titles and insignia, but was compensated by being awarded ducal domains in Silesia (*Kontler*, pp169-172). See also Gyula Szekfű, *Bethlen Gábor*, Helikon Kiadó, Budapest, 1983 (reprint of the 1929 original).

attainment, self-reliance on the part of the nation, awareness of its inner strength and looking ahead with confidence to an auspicious future) with their commitment to renewing the nation and it was against this backdrop that the Hungarian vices were thrown into high relief: the reckless pursuit of cheap glory, refusal to learn the lessons of the relevant times and situations, the bitter ecstasy of seeking to end a wasted life through a violent death and the drowsy slump into a lethargy in which all concerns become immaterial.<sup>1016</sup>

Quoting from an earlier work (published in 1927),<sup>1017</sup> Makkai reiterates his view that being in a minority added a new dimension to the Hungarian identity, bringing two further tasks in its wake:

" 'On the one hand it [the Hungarian minority] must everywhere concede that in the interests of being able to maintain its existence and in the absence of political independence and power the *sole* means of self-preservation rests on its own national traditions, but which involves the autonomous development of intellectual and moral life depending on the circumstances which prevail. On the other hand it must also realise that this culture cannot have the effect of secluding and constricting - condemned to death in other words - but must everywhere be more *universal*, the eternal heights of humanity must be more easily accessible through it and it must in itself be more profoundly humane than that of the mother country from which it was severed. Inevitably the culture of every independent country must conform to the political interest whereas the minority is not bound by such interest and is always able to place its national character in the service of universal human ideals, may search for and draw closer to the peaks of the great common values binding nations together. Minorities have a vocation by necessity, arising from the sufferings they undergo as a result of their situation to pave the way for a nobler mankind, a more universal humane mentality and for the sublime and healing future of true brotherhood amongst men. No suffering has been or will be without reason, indeed it will represent a downright act of providence in the life of the world if minorities fathom this divine calling, accept it and set about it with enthusiasm.'

On this basis I professed even then that the Hungarians of Transylvania must cultivate an intellectual life, which has its roots in the *Hungarian* legacy and builds on it, but

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<sup>1016</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp70-75.

<sup>1017</sup> *Közönség és irodalom*, published in *A mi utunk* in 1929 (see p76).

which is independent and self-consciously seeks out and fosters *universally human values*".<sup>1018</sup>

To gauge the scale of the undertaking, Makkai proceeds to contrast the cultural position of the Hungarians with their Romanian counterparts and the *anyaországaiak* (his analysis showing that he is aware of the need for adequate resources to reproduce a collective identity). The first crucial advantage enjoyed by the latter two groups is that they are protected and given succour by what he terms the national empire and have an entire arsenal of material, legal and institutional resources at their disposal. It still seemed natural for a country to at most tolerate minority culture and graciously permit it to stay alive, but affording it special protection and sustenance, particularly in encouraging the retention of its national characteristics, was not perceived as being in the general interest. One of the dominant components of the minority Hungarian psyche was the awareness that they belonged to no such earthly empire. The practical implication of this was that the Hungarians had to be entirely self-reliant and that their only accomplishments would be those they achieved without external assistance of any kind. The degree of success would depend on the level of organisation, as this was the measure of the minority's strength. However its prospects appeared gloomy indeed if this were the yardstick applied. In order to fulfil their destiny, the Hungarians would have to accept that the empire of which they were subjects was an empire of the spirit and character and conceive of it not as a vague, meaningless apparition, but a magnificent reality:

"How then should we accustom ourselves to living with the spiritual empire? In our conceptual framework we must strip the word "Hungarian" of the geographical, state, legal and political meanings and focus on the *eternally* Hungarian: the *spiritual nation*. This spiritual nation assumes tangible form before us in the thoughts, creations and character of the *great figures* of the Hungarian past and in the works of the Hungarian intellect, in the realms of science, literature, art, moral ideals, practical philosophy and customs. The nation, as made palpable in this way, is a *spiritual* reality, but a reality nonetheless: a living, active, formative, didactic power.

Collectively it is the reality of a peculiar temperament, character and way of life, which forever binds together those who were born and raised by this Spirit. It is a *spiritual unity*, creating a shared mentality, outlook on life and way of living, which

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<sup>1018</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp76-7. Emphasis in original.



the common mother tongue immortalises, expresses, preaches, defends and strengthens".<sup>1019</sup>

Revising national consciousness consisted of the two steps of transforming temporal Hungarianness to spiritual and of ascribing equal strength to it in spite of the ardours the lack of outside support implied.<sup>1020</sup> It also included facing the secret fear that unity automatically erased all social distinctions. Whereas everyone publicly subscribed to the legally sanctified principle of full equality in rights and obligations regardless of origin, rank, title or diploma, they sought refuge in these subtle gradations setting them apart from their fellows. In a nutshell equality was more than human nature could bear and it was well nigh impossible to persuade anyone to embrace it with open arms. Unity was not unconditional levelling: complete equality always had been and always would be an illusion. The real impediment to unity was the tendency for individuals to consider themselves qualitatively different to the masses below, who were somehow not fully human. This mindset had lead to the chronic state of fragmentation of Hungarian society. Selfishness, arrogance and vanity fuelled the superstition that blood, essence and constitution separated the elite from the herd whereas the actual disparity was of position, power and possessions. Similarly prestige could be conferred by professional status. The heart of the problem was not the existence of the differences themselves, but their effect in preventing the minority from establishing unified social organisations. In circumstances where the Hungarians had been cast to the winds and had no one else to turn to, insistence on privileges and cultural superiority could prove fatal. Inclusion on the basis of Hungarianness would have to replace exclusion and exclusivism, which called for moral responsibility and goodwill.<sup>1021</sup> Thus the counter-tactic to the Romanian assault on resources was to stand shoulder to shoulder, ignoring divisions of rank. The survival of the minority could only be guaranteed by the survival of the ordinary people, the overwhelming majority of whom were employed in agriculture. Those who earned a living from teaching or other white collar activities could make a valuable contribution by living for and amongst the people, serving them as leaders and assuming responsibility for the precious resource buried deep within the popular

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<sup>1019</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp77-80. The quotation p79. Emphasis in original.

<sup>1020</sup> *Op. cit.*, p80.

<sup>1021</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp86-92.

soul, the Hungarian essence. Its value did not diminish merely because it was not the exclusive property of the few and could be more readily compared to an uncut diamond than a worthless pebble. Makkai rejected the widespread misapprehension that the people were a lesser breed incapable of the finer feelings of their self-appointed superiors. Narrower horizons and less sophisticated means of expressing their innermost feelings were an inevitable by product of the social reality they inhabited, but this could not be construed as a difference of substance or true import and ironically the educated were more prone to fall prey to prejudice than their unschooled compatriots.<sup>1022</sup>

The daunting task ahead was to convert the Hungarian multitudes into a living organism whose every constituent cell functioned harmoniously alongside all the others for the good of the whole. This was the best route towards consolidating the innate strength of the minority and left scope for difference in accordance with a division of labour. Working the land gave rise to a permanent lifestyle with its own independent content and should not be regarded with condescending disdain. The concept of the people, burdened with connotations such as coarseness, abject poverty and inferior spirituality, ought to be reassessed and their lot improved by the experts, writers and artists who would raise their awareness in a spirit of paternal affection. In return the people would supply the fertile soil and the resources vital for raising future generations of leaders who would repay their debt by devoting themselves to enhancing the prosperity of their charges rather than preying on them. Establishing this symbiosis was the historical mission to be fulfilled.<sup>1023</sup>

At the same time industrial workers would have to be shepherded gently into the fold. A gulf in mentality had opened up between them and the body of the nation with concentration on class interests preventing them from forming part of the organism. The shared experience of the trials and tribulations of belonging to a minority might, however, suffice to bridge the gap. Extending a hand of friendship was a solemn obligation.<sup>1024</sup>

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<sup>1022</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp94-96.

<sup>1023</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp100-102.

<sup>1024</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp102-103.

A few trusted leading lights within the minority could assemble to pinpoint the most urgent tasks and draw up a programme outlining a policy for it.<sup>1025</sup>

Since the younger generation would be the prime beneficiaries of any revision of national consciousness it was also essential to jettison prejudices in relation to education and upbringing whereby the impulse on the part of the teachers and parents was to write off the current system whilst cherishing fond recollections of the old, reinforced by the constraints, hindrances and frustrations of the previous twelve years. No matter how convenient a scapegoat these difficulties might be they still did not absolve the Hungarians of all responsibility for their children. Laws and state measures could provide a framework within which education could be provided, but the values to be instilled in tender minds emanated from the minority itself. The process of revision had to encompass the contradictions that had arisen where national sentiment was aroused, moral idealism advocated and scientific objectivity used as an analytical tool to dissect both. The new zeitgeist of a more practical approach to the major issues in life, familiarisation with the facts rather than world views and a critical examination of the past and the national being replace the pre-war conventional wisdom that no longer seemed valid.<sup>1026</sup>

The Transylvanianist gospel of reconciliation and gravitating away from Hungary largely fell on deaf ears both on the Hungarian and on the Romanian side where the nationalist principle of classification reigned unchallenged. As far as Romanian representations of the Hungarian minority were concerned with a few honourable exceptions,<sup>1027</sup> hostility was the order of the day. If there was one issue on which a consensus existed in Romanian interwar politics it was hostility towards the minorities, as Imre Mikó summarised:

"The changing governments were consistent in one respect. Their minority policy was guided by the declaration made by Ionel Brătianu after the peace conference: now the world should observe how the minorities disappear from Romania! His major opponent Maniu also confessed: *it is us or them!* With this in mind the resolute

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<sup>1025</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 108-110.

<sup>1026</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp 112-120.

<sup>1027</sup> For example Victor Eftimiu who deplored the excesses of certain newspapers. See Mikó, pp154-155.

steadfastness with which this basic principle was implemented by every government, irrespective of ideology and party affiliation, becomes understandable in the broader context of the countless instances of confusion, inconsistency and improvisation in Romanian domestic politics. A further factor contributed to the lack of comprehension concerning the minorities issue displayed by the Romanian leaders from the Regat and to Transylvania's descent into colonial status, which also poisoned the lives of the Transylvanian Hungarians. This was the Transylvanian Romanian middle-classes' hatred of the Hungarians. To the Romanian intellectuals emerging from the ordinary people the Hungarian aristocracy and middle class personified the past oppressors of the Romanians. Here not only prejudice based on nationality, but also a degree of class hatred flared up and the leading groups in Transylvanian Romanian society also endeavoured to vest their political battles against the Hungarians the appealing semblance of the young, popular, democratic Romania struggling against the obsolete, feudal Hungarians who were clinging to their injustices of the past. By contrast the reality was that the nouveau riche, plutocratic Transylvanian Romanian leaders who quickly assimilated to the corruption of the Regat for twenty two years opposed the Hungarian leaders whom they welded together - regardless of whether or not this was their intention - in a single community of fate with the Hungarian masses by lowering the level of prosperity of those masses through the agricultural reform, language examinations,<sup>1028</sup> "numeruses"<sup>1029</sup> and similar deleterious provisions.

The Byzantism of the Regat and the chauvinism of the Transylvanian Romanians were the determining factors of Romanian minority policy. These factors intensified further and lent an anti-minority edge to the naturally full-blooded nationalism, which already fired the national consciousness of the young state whose territory had expanded. The Romanian petit and grand bourgeoisie therefore had a chauvinistic

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<sup>1028</sup> The reference is to the new system introduced by an amendment to the law on private education. Even teachers who had passed an examination attesting to their proficiency in Romanian could be required to sit another. If they failed they could be banned from exercising their profession. Mass dismissals followed. See *Mikó*, p148.

<sup>1029</sup> The *numerus valachius* movement was conceived in 1933 and initially sought to impose quotas on the minorities in education, but spread to include other professions and commerce. See *Huszonkét év*, pp152-153. In practice, a *numerus nullus* was voted for at the National Lawyers Association congress in 1937, although it was never fully implemented. See *Mikó*, pp178-179.

leaning anyway and it turned with as fierce xenophobic hatred to any segment of the population, which in its estimation represented a foreign body within the Romanian state, as it was keen to absorb without inhibition any foreigner who wanted to be Romanian even to the extent of pushing the country to the brink of economic crisis. This chauvinism was artificially exacerbated by the Romanian press in an effort to boost circulation with the notorious *Universul* in the vanguard. No newspaper wanted to be left out of this contest and the readership equated the most patriotic with the one who thumped the minority hardest. The press imputed a whiff of irredentism to every manifestation of life on the part of the minority, it launched the anti-revisionist movement from which it derived considerable profit and when it put Hungarian journalists in the dock for articles, which had been approved by the censors the Romanian press was able to promise the Hungarians of Transylvania a Massacre of Saint Bartholomew with impunity".<sup>1030</sup>

On 25th August 1931 Artúr Balogh and Gábor Pál tabled a complaint with the League of Nations concerning school textbooks endorsed by the Ministry of Education, which contained denigrating remarks on the lifestyles of the Huns and the Hungarians. In a reader intended for primary school pupils the following verse could be found: "Oh Hungarians, rabid dogs, we have suffered much at your hands, but now it is our turn, to avenge ourselves". In its reply, the Romanian government insisted that the textbooks dealt with Hungarians of the 8th and 9th centuries rather than those of the present day.<sup>1031</sup>

The situation grew worse after Gyula Gömbös became Hungarian Prime Minister on 1st October 1932 and included fair territorial revision on the basis of nationality distribution amongst the 95-point programme of his government. The newspaper *Universul*, owned by former Minister of Justice Stelian Popescu, headed the initiative, which led to the founding of the Antirevisionist League alluded to by Mikó above.

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<sup>1030</sup> Imre Mikó: *Erdélyi magyarság a világháború után*. In: *Magyarok és románok*, Volume 2, edited by József Deér and László Gáldi, Athenaeum, Budapest, 1944, pp213-214. The reference to the massacre alludes to an article penned by Octavian M. Dobrota, which appeared on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1936 and advocated the destruction of Hungarian dissenters. See *Mikó*, pp168-170 and pp291-293 for the full text of the article.

<sup>1031</sup> See *Mikó*, p124.

Membership of the League was mandatory for all civil servants, including Hungarians, from whose salaries the membership fee was deducted.<sup>1032</sup>

As the storm clouds gathered, Makkai published an article in the Hungarian journal *Horizon (Látóhatár)* from the safety of the mother country he had finally succeeded in returning to in 1936. With its uncompromising tone, *It is not possible (Nem lehet)* dealt a severe blow to the confidence of the Hungarians with its bleak, but realistic appraisal of the plight of the minority. Makkai voiced his conviction that with the passing of time more and more obstacles would be strewn in the path of a political solution to the minorities issue, which would complicate the social, economic, legal and cultural realities faced by the Hungarians in their everyday lives, with the peace treaty resembling a death sentence more closely every day. Ignoring the problem would mean disaster in the long run. Certain individuals believed that oppression, coercion, compromise or downgrading could sort out the difficulties, but regardless of whether their intentions were good or bad they all laboured under the misapprehension that the problem could actually be solved. Makkai could not envisage any way out as he judged the category of minority beneath human dignity and psychologically impossible:

"There was an illusion, which was nourished by the spirit of liberalism and which held out the prospect to the victims of the World War who had the fate of being in a minority thrust upon them that humanity would soon outgrow the sad childhood ailment of racial and national prejudice and would be replaced by consciousness of humanity's oneness, universal love of mankind and respect for the spirit according to which the political frontiers dividing peoples would be obliterated without a trace and that in this heaven on earth the bitter antagonisms, which now torment so many million human lives to extinction, would dwindle into insignificance.

Let us not show one ounce of regret for the shattering of this illusion, as it was in itself the biggest possible lie. Entirely the opposite has occurred: new kind of national consciousness never seen before has blossomed and materialised, which declares war on all bland and hypocritical lies. The nations have sensed that their *human* nature consists of the deliberate cultivation of their peculiar racial and historical characteristics and not of sacrificing them for the sake of a universality, which,

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<sup>1032</sup> Mikó, p135.

whenever an attempt at achieving it has been made thus far, has only proven that behind its bright promises lurk the darkest tyranny".<sup>1033</sup>

Only within his own national community could someone feel truly human and although national and ethnic frontiers did not necessarily coincide, the ardour of the new national consciousness meant that in practice individuals could only enjoy fair opportunities where their national community was sovereign. The Hungarian minority was not doomed to overnight assimilation since it was still possible to eke out a meagre subsistence even in a position of inferiority, but it could not develop nationally, which in the new Europe meant not being able to live as a real human being.

However, introspection and drawing comfort from its past and its creative spirit was no compensation for being excluded from full participation in the life of a state. Being confined to the cultural sphere in exercising authority over itself was no substitute. Seen in the cold light of day, no culture could thrive and develop cut off from the conditions that keep it alive. This meant that the cultural life of the minority was doomed to regression and slow decay. Morally as well as politically, life as a minority was impossible.<sup>1034</sup>

The response from those who had stayed behind is encapsulated most succinctly in the title of Sándor Remenyik's critique: *It is possible because it is has to be.*<sup>1035</sup>

## Conclusion

During the interwar years, the nationalist principle of classification held sway in both Hungary and Romania. This meant that whereas the national identity of the majority population was taken for granted that of the minority was construed as problematic. The Hungarians of Transylvania had to adapt their identity to fit in with their new political surroundings. Far from being an exercise in nationalist opportunism, it was the sole means of preserving their language and culture where these were under threat

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<sup>1033</sup> Makkai: *Nem lehet*. Originally published in *Látóhatár*, 1937, number II, pp49-53. In: *Nem lehet. A kisebbségi sors vitája*. Compiled by Petér Cseke and Gusztáv Molnár. Héttorony Könyvkiadó, Tatabánya, 1989, pp106-108, quotation p108.

<sup>1034</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp110-111.

<sup>1035</sup> Published in *Ellenzék*, 17th February 1937. Makkai's pessimistic conclusions sparked a major debate, for which see *Trianon*, pp503-513 and Péter Cseke and Gusztáv Molnár, *op.cit.*

of erosion. That the various Romanian governments were never willing to accept them as a possible source of cultural enrichment is revealed by the discriminatory legislation continually passed against them and designed to undermine their ability to maintain their distinctiveness.

The materiality of national identity was not contested even in the case of the minority. On the contrary, the untenability of the latter's position derived from the discrepancy between the functional and material components of its identity. What counted for Romanian politicians was not that the Hungarians had become citizens of their country, but that they were ethnically different. The increasingly vocal irredentist clamourings of Hungarian nationalists across the border merely confirmed their Romanian counterparts in their belief that assimilation was the only solution to the minority problem.

Counteracting the pernicious effects of the attacks on their ability to retain a separate identity placed a particularly heavy burden upon Hungarian intellectuals who were expected not merely to engage in the activity of producing representations, but also to provide political leadership.

Ultimately, Romania's fears concerning Hungary's desire to reacquire the territories lost at Trianon were justified. In the summer of 1940, Stalin issued an ultimatum to Romania demanding that it cede Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina. Anxious to prevent oil supplies from Romania being cut off should Hungary decide to join the fray on the Russian side, Hitler gave his blessing to a revision of the Hungarian-Romanian frontier. At negotiations, Hungary requested the return of 70,000 square kilometres of land (over two-thirds of the 102,000 it had been deprived of at Trianon). The proposed new border followed the course of the *Maros/Mureş*, roughly corresponding to the demarcation line from the end of the First World War. Since the bulk of the population dwelling in these tracts was Romanian it did not meet with that country's approval. Nor did the counter-proposal suit the Hungarians. In order to stave off an armed conflict, Hitler suggested that Germany and Italy arbitrate in the matter. The result, known as the Second Vienna Award (30<sup>th</sup> August 1940) gave 43,000 square kilometres and 2.5 million people back to Hungary, including the Székely lands and half of Northern Transylvania. According to the 1941 Hungarian census, 52% of its inhabitants were Hungarian, 38% Romanian and 10% Saxon. Some 400,000 Hungarians remained under Romanian rule in Southern Transylvania. The price extracted from Hungary was high, however: the National-Socialist German



Volksbund became the sole lawful organisation representing its Germans, further discriminatory laws against the Jews were passed, the volume of food and animal fodder exports to Germany was increased, German troops marched into Romania via Hungary, Ferenc Szálasi, leader of the fascist Arrow Cross Movement was released from prison and on 20<sup>th</sup> November, Hungary officially acceded to the Tripartite Pact, the death knell of its policy of neutrality.<sup>1036</sup>

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<sup>1036</sup> *Romsics 2000*, pp245-7.

## Chapter Three: From Agitation to Assimilation

### Introduction

The Trianon trauma had quite different effects on Hungarians depending on which side of the new borders they found themselves on. In Hungary, the left-right political divide became pivotal because of the defeat of Communism and Béla Kun's Soviet Republic, whereas it played very little role in Romania because of the de facto coalition the minority members lived in. At the same time, there was a degree of sympathy for the Comintern line of all-out (but tactical) support for the rights of minorities. This became important towards the end of World War Two when the minority lined up behind the personalities who prepared the ground for the Communist takeover, an allegiance, which did not endear it to the rest of the population.

In its early days, the Romanian Communist Party was both weak and unpopular. Its membership of Comintern earned it no plaudits amongst their fellow countrymen (with the exception of the Hungarian minority), as the Soviets gave priority to their own foreign policy goals over the need for the Party to become a legitimate political force, forcing the Romanian Communists to support the relinquishing of Bessarabia. Worse still, the Romanian Party was viewed as a foreign organisation, largely composed of Hungarians and Jews. Less than 25% of its members were in fact ethnic Romanians.<sup>1037</sup>

It was also riven by internal strife between the Muscovite faction (the group around Ana Pauker and Vasile (László) Luka) and the home Communists (headed by

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<sup>1037</sup> For these points, see Steven D. Roper, *Romania: The Unfinished Revolution*, Harwood Academic Publishers, Amsterdam, 2000, p4. On the evolution of the Party, see also Vladimir Tismaneanu, *The Tragicomedy of Romanian Communism*, in *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, Volume 3 (2), 1989, pp329-376. Between 1924 and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's appointment in 1944, all RCP general secretaries were non-ethnic Romanians (Tismaneanu, *op.cit.*, p349). For the Gheorghiu-Dej period, see also Stephen Fischer-Galați, *Prelude to Communist Totalitarianism, August 1944-March 1964*, in *Giurescu 1998*, pp391-440 and by the same author, *Romania under Communism*, in *Giurescu 1998*, pp441-479.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej). Hostility between them only ceased when the Muscovites were purged in 1952. Prior to that, however, Gheorghiu-Dej had already eliminated two of his main rivals Ștefan Foriș (an ethnic Hungarian) and Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, so that the fate of the MNSZ [see below] should be seen as part of a broader strategy of *Gleichschaltung*.<sup>1038</sup>

As far as identity was concerned, the advent of Communism brought with it a new principle of classification, which (ostensibly at least) rejected its nationalist predecessor. The relationship between Communism and nationalism in Romania, however, proved to be more complex.

### **3.1 Transition from Fascist to Communist Dictatorship: The Hungarian Popular Alliance (*Magyar Népi Szövetség*)**

The Allied Control Commission insisted that Romania's annexation of Northern Transylvania could not go ahead unless it could dispel doubts about its democratic credentials and provide guarantees of equal rights for the minorities. On the surface there seemed to be good grounds for hope of better prospects for the Hungarians in the future: on 14th November 1944, law 575 created the Ministry of Minority and Nationality Affairs with Gheorghe Vlădescu-Răcoasa in charge. Its mandate was specified in law seven of January of the following year with the three main tasks of studying and registering the most important issues arising from the situation of minorities living in Romania, coming up with appropriate legal, administrative and political solutions to them in the Nationalities Statute to be drafted and to supervise

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<sup>1038</sup> On the frictions, see Roper, *op.cit.*, pp13-26. Foriș was general secretary of the Party between 1940 and 1944. During the war, he was accused by Gheorghiu-Dej of having sabotaged the organisation of partisan warfare in Romania after June 1941. After his arrest by an RCP commando unit, he was held in secret until his assassination in 1946 (Tismaneanu, *op.cit.*, p350). Pătrășcanu lost his Politburo seat in 1946, having been publicly excoriated by Gheorghiu-Dej for nationalism. At the Sixth Party Congress in 1948 he was not re-elected to the Central Committee and lost his post as Minister of Justice. Shortly afterwards he was placed under house arrest before finally being executed in 1954 (Tismaneanu, *op.cit.*, pp361 and 365).

and monitor the implementation of the relevant measures covering all aspects of the minorities' social interaction with the majority.<sup>1039</sup>

The Statute itself was promulgated on 6th February 1945 in law 86 under the Rădescu government and represented a massive improvement compared with any policy in the interwar period, outlawing all discrimination against minorities and for the first time enshrining collective rights in respect of language.<sup>1040</sup>

Its main provisions were that citizens of non-Romanian mother tongue, race or religion would receive equal treatment and the same legal and actual protection as the remainder of Romania's citizens (paragraph four); that direct or indirect restrictions of civil rights on the basis of the origin, religion or nationality of Romanian citizens and the establishment of privileges on such a basis as well as the propagation of racial, religious and national segregation, hatred and contempt were to be punishable by law (likewise paragraph four); that every Romanian citizen had the right to determine his mother tongue or nationality (paragraph five) and that in those administrative and judicial districts where the non-Romanian speaking population comprised at least 30 per cent of the total the tribunals and district courts were obliged to accept any application drawn up and submitted by a citizen in his mother tongue without being permitted to demand a translation into Romanian, to arrive at a decision concerning the application in question in the same language and to give a hearing to the party in

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<sup>1039</sup> See: Andrea R. Süle, *România politikatörténete 1944-1990*, p205. In: *România 1944-1990, Gazdaság- és politikatörténet*, Atlantisz; Medvetánc, Budapest, 1990 and *Hetven év*, p62.

<sup>1040</sup> Although it is fair to contend, as does Gábor Vincze, that the provisions of the statute represented a step backwards for the Hungarians of Northern Transylvania, particularly as regards the independence of the Hungarian university in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca-Napoca* and the 30 per cent threshold. Indeed prior to its adoption, the Hungarian Committee of the Romanian Social Democratic Party sent a letter to the Party's Central Executive Committee condemning the Statute on various fronts. It was deemed to be more restrictive than the 1868 Hungarian law on the nationalities, antidemocratic because more suitable threshold for the town clerks and registrars to be bilingual, at the lower levels of administration and justice the official language of proceedings should be that spoken by 80 per cent of the population under their jurisdiction, strict observance of proportionality should be compulsory in appointments to public office, 20 children should suffice to warrant a separate state school being run for the minorities and a canton system be established instituting autonomous local government for the nationalities. See: Gábor Vincze: *A romániai magyar kisebbség történeti kronológiája, 1944-1953*. Teleki László Alapítvány, Budapest-Szeged, 1994 (hereinafter *Vincze I*), pp 23 and 21 respectively and the passage on the *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca-Napoca* ordinance below.

his native language (paragraphs six and eight).<sup>1041</sup> Furthermore, in counties and districts with an identical non-Romanian speaking population ratio the latter rules applied to the public authorities with the addition that the elected or other de jure representatives had the right to take the floor in their mother tongue (paragraph ten). The judges and civil servants employed in local administrations would have to possess a knowledge of the language concerned [the expression contained in the text is "be familiar with"].<sup>1042</sup>

The statute also addressed some of the problems, which had arisen in the past, for example, paragraph thirteen stated that daily and periodical press publications printed in languages other than Romanian could denote the name of their seat and all other place names in the country in the language of the nationality concerned. Paragraph fourteen outlawed the romanianization of surnames in official documents; paragraph fifteen provided for street signs in the minority language (again where the proportion of the local population reached 30 per cent), whilst paragraph sixteen clarified that civil servants, regardless of rank, would not under any circumstances be compelled to sit a Romanian language examination provided that their appointment took place on the basis of a diploma or certificate issued by an educational establishment recognised by the state.

As far as education was concerned, paragraph eighteen guaranteed mother tongue instruction at state primary, secondary and higher education schools "for the cohabiting nationalities who have an appropriate number of pupils with the exception of those localities where the denominational schools already satisfy these needs"<sup>1043</sup> and that in allocating teaching posts in non-Romanian language state schools, members of the relevant nationality would be given preference. Paragraph twenty granted pupils of state and denominational schools with a language of tuition other than Romanian the right to sit examinations in the language in which the relevant subject was taught. The denominational schools run by national minorities were put

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<sup>1041</sup> Source: *Jelentések a Határon Túli Magyar Kisebbségekről*. (hereinafter *Medvetánc*) (ELTE), Budapest, 1988, pp127-128. See also: *A nemzetiségek egyenjogúsításának útján. A nemzetiségi jog fejlődése a népi demokratikus Romániában (1944. szeptember 2- 1948. április 13.)* Joó Rudolf beszélgetése Demeter Jánossal, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1983. The text of the Statute is reproduced in full on pp113-117.

<sup>1042</sup> *Medvetánc*, p128.

<sup>1043</sup> *Op. cit.*, p129.

on an equal footing with their Romanian counterparts in terms of funding by paragraph twenty one. Finally, paragraph twenty two allowed for Hungarian and German departments to be set up within the law and humanities faculties of the *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* University of the Sciences (subject to demand).<sup>1044</sup>

The Nationalities Ministry would take the necessary steps together with the Ministry of Justice to deal with the backlog of applications for Romanian citizenship and fix a new deadline for further requests.<sup>1045</sup>

In Northern Transylvania the Executive Committee of the National Democratic Front charged its legal section with drafting a decree on language usage, which it subsequently recommended to all public authorities. In *Kolozs/Cluj* County, it officially entered into force on 10 February 1945. The most striking passages included the following: that Romanian and Hungarian were both the official languages of the county (paragraph three); that if at least 90 per cent of the population of areas under the jurisdiction of the authority, office or public institution concerned spoke the same language then that language would be used for internal administrative purposes; if at least ten per cent of the population belonged to another ethnic group the minutes of the meetings would be recorded in both languages; internally every civil servant enjoyed the right to use freely whichever of the two languages he saw fit; all internal and external signs, official signs pertaining to transport and street names had to be in both Romanian and Hungarian; the postal, railway and other transport services were under a legal obligation to deliver letters, parcels and so on addressed in Hungarian; no authority, office or public institution was empowered to prohibit Romanian or Hungarian private individuals from procuring cultural products such as books or films, indeed it was their duty to facilitate access to such materials provided they did not subvert morals, or offend against the reconciliation between peoples or legal equality; civil servants could not be dismissed for not being familiar with both languages; in recruiting new officials, knowledge of both languages was not necessary for a successful application; knowledge of both languages could only be required if this was essential to the performance of duties; those civil servants who did not meet

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<sup>1044</sup> As above.

<sup>1045</sup> *Op. cit.*, p129, paragraph 26. The Statute was flanked by law 630 of 6th August 1945, the full text of which may be found in *Medvetánc*, pp130-132, and by-laws 11 and 12 of 26th September 1946. *Op. cit.*, p74.

this condition were expected to enrol on a free language course and furnish proof within two years of sufficient proficiency; recruitment procedures would take account of the relative proportions of Romanians and Hungarians in the population at large and reflect this in their staffing and this principle would also function as a guideline in the award of industry permits and public works contracts.<sup>1046</sup>

Once Northern Transylvania was united with Romania, these provisions ceased to be valid.<sup>1047</sup>

Although ultimately the Statute remained a dead letter,<sup>1048</sup> constantly cited as evidence of the liberal approach post-liberation Romania evinced towards its minorities (thereby effectively depriving them of a genuine forum before which to air their complaints as well as insinuating that possible criticisms were inspired more by churlishness and impatience rather than real problems), the mere fact of its drafting demonstrated that laying the legal foundations for a more conciliatory application of the principle of classification, which would allow for the Hungarians to be accepted as Romanian citizens, was a matter of political will. János Demeter described its significance as follows: "it was the first attempt at placing the entire area of nationality relations on new legal foundations having repealed the expressly discriminatory provisions".<sup>1049</sup>

The contradictory nature of policy towards the minority during the transition to one-party rule is revealed by the implementation of numerous provisions with a directly discriminatory effect on the Hungarians, the most blatant of which was the law concerning the expropriation of goods and property belonging to foreign nationals published in the *Monitorul Oficial* on 10th February 1945 setting up the CASBI (*Casa pentru Administrarera și Supravegherea Bunurilor Inamice*).<sup>1050</sup> The text of the law cited Article Eight of the armistice, which obliged the government to appropriate all goods belonging to subjects of the countries with which hostilities had

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<sup>1046</sup> Rudolf Joó, *op. cit.*, pp39-40 and pp199-124 for the full text of the *Kolozs/Cluj* ordinance.

<sup>1047</sup> *Op. cit.*, p41.

<sup>1048</sup> The Hungarian Autonomous Province voided it of any meaning.

<sup>1049</sup> Rudolf Joó, *op. cit.*, p36. Demeter was an expert on human and minority rights, was Deputy Mayor of *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* at the end of 1944 and one of the leading personalities in the Hungarian Popular Alliance.

<sup>1050</sup> For a detailed account of CASBI and its activities, see Gábor Vincze, *Magyar vagyon román kézen*, Pro-Print Könyvkiadó, Csíkszereda, 2000.

not ended, namely Germany and Hungary. Since the Hungarian government had signed a ceasefire agreement on 20th January in Moscow, Hungary no longer fell under this category. In spite of this, the CASBI confiscated the moveable and immovables in Southern Transylvania and the Regat that were owned by Hungarians who on 12th September 1944 resided in Hungary (including Northern Transylvania) as well as those in Northern Transylvania whose owners had been outside the frontiers on 30th August 1940 or who had fled from the front on the previous date. Even individuals who had in the meantime returned to their domiciles were classed as "presumed enemies" and the total number of those Hungarians who subsequently had their assets seized was 30,000.<sup>1051</sup>

In the midst of the turmoil, on 16th October 1944, the Hungarians mustered the strength to form the Hungarian Popular Alliance, hereinafter MNSZ (*Magyar Népi Szövetség*) from the ashes of the National Alliance of Hungarian Workers (*Magyar Dolgozók Országos Szövetsége*) with Gyárfás Kurkó,<sup>1052</sup> Nándor Czikó, László Bányai, Béla Csákány and Sándor Dávid as its leading figures. A 27-strong Executive Committee was entrusted with general organisation, drawing up its articles and preparing for its first national congress. The MNSZ aligned itself with the National Democratic Front's governmental programme and declared its support of the Romanian Communist Party. The policy crystallised further at the congress held between 6 and 13 May in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* at which Kurkó was elected president and Csákány secretary-general. On its final day, Petru Groza, Vasile (*László*) Luka and others attended the assembly in the sports hall in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*.<sup>1053</sup>

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<sup>1051</sup> See Vincze I, pp23-24; *Hetven év*, pp62-63 and Süle, *op. cit.*, p206.

<sup>1052</sup> Kurkó (1909-1983) was a founding member of the *Magyar Dolgozók Szövetsége* (Hungarian Workers' Alliance) in 1934. After the Second Vienna Award he was deported from Hungary and imprisoned for refusing to carry out military service. Once he had outlived his political usefulness in paving the way for the Communist takeover, he was arrested and jailed. Released in 1964, he lived as a virtual recluse.

<sup>1053</sup> See Ildikó Lipcsey: *A Romániai Magyar Népi Szövetség 1944-1948 in Történelmi Szemle*, 1985, 1, pp96-98. On 9th March, Stalin had telegraphed to Groza following the latter's appointment as Prime Minister on the 6th that: "Considering that the new government, which has now taken over the task of ruling the country, is assuming responsibility for proper order and calm in Transylvania and guarantees the rights of the nationalities [...] the Soviet government has decided to fulfil the Romanian government's request and in accordance with the armistice signed on 12th September 1944 gives its



The MNSZ championed the interests of the Hungarians and, although it declined to form part of the government, was able to bring its influence to bear on a number of pressing issues. In August of 1945, for example, a delegation of 30 travelled to Bucharest to present various proposals on culture, most of which the government agreed to. The denominational and state schools in which Hungarian was the language of teaching were recognised as being entitled to issue certificates, deserters who had fled northwards from Southern Transylvania between 30th August 1940 and 23rd August 1944 were pardoned and promises were secured including exempting from the CASBI inventory persons who had been carried off by the detachments, been drafted for labour service or conscripted.<sup>1054</sup>

The MNSZ functioned autonomously with a mass base of support totalling 387,753 members when its first congress was held.<sup>1055</sup> Its leaders were sincere in their convictions and dedication to their cause and the eventual demise of their organisation had more to do with its having outlived its usefulness in the eyes of the Romanian Workers Party (as it became) than with its having become defunct in terms of the need for its agitation on behalf of the minority. Throughout its brief lifespan the MNSZ was anxious to give the impression that it spoke on behalf of all Hungarians and to smooth over dissent in order to present a harmonious united front, which would enhance the likelihood of its demands being met.

This approach suffused the public statements of its president and the official representations of Hungarian minority identity. When chaos reigned in the early months, Kurkó was keen to stress the blamelessness of the Hungarians and their calm perseverance in the face of adversity:

"We democratic Hungarians living in Romania, have never for a single moment shirked in our responsibilities towards the Romanian state. We have accepted all the difficulties of minority fate. Our people has suffered and continues to suffer.

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consent to the introduction of the Romanian government's administration in Transylvania". Although in theory this was not the same as placing Transylvania under Romanian sovereignty, it foreshadowed the final verdict at Paris. Between the handover and the signing of the treaty on 10th February 1947, Romania had to tread carefully to avoid stacking the odds against *restitutio in integrum*. Süle, *op. cit.*, p208. See also *Hetven év*, p65.

<sup>1054</sup> Vincze I, p34.

<sup>1055</sup> Vincze I, p29. By the time of the second congress in June 1946, the ranks of the MNSZ had swollen to 449,000. Vincze I, p47.

Whereas only our chauvinist masters are the criminals. We, the democratic Hungarians, never drew anti-Romanian, racist conclusions from the torturing, persecutions and imprisonments we suffered at the hands of the fascist Romanian authorities. We hope that everyone is fully aware of how Hitler's regime of terror murdered Romanian and Hungarian democrats alike.

Today, however, we raise our voices in protest against the Hungarian democratic masses being lumped together with the Hitlerist Arrow Cross traitors with whom Hungarian democracy has begun to settle its score".<sup>1056</sup>

The MNSZ had never stooped to the level of its opponents, but had remained true to the enlightened principles of democracy and to their identity:

"Racial hatred, the tried and tested weapon of antidemocratic politicians of any era, was raging full tilt when we had to nail our political colours to the mast in front of the broad masses of our people. This was not a matter of coincidence. Instead it was a cleverly calculated chess move on their part, which they did not succeed in pulling off. We immediately recognised and used the antidote to it.

[...] In the wake of 23rd August the Hungarians once again seemed to be a suitable scapegoat...<sup>1057</sup>

The country's workers were demanding higher wages, their peasant associates demanding land and in order to thwart them in their just battle the bogus democrats shouted "batter the Hungarians". They wanted to kill two birds with one stone: leaving the people's democracy fighting for bread and land unanswered and using their repressive efforts as a means of winning Romanian votes one after the other. The intellectual writers, following Hitler's recipe, launched an onslaught. There can be no doubts as to the result. Romanians who a couple of days previously had been perfectly peaceful began carrying out attacks on their Hungarian fellow citizens with sticks, weapons and grenades in their hands. Armed youths, seething with racial hatred, executed innocent Székely fathers and women in the most pitiless manner.

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<sup>1056</sup> From Gyárfás Kurkó: *Népi Egység*, 25 October 1944. In: *Kurkó Gyárfás emlékére. Személyes beszédeiből, cikkeiből és róla szóló írásokból*. Compiled by Ildikó Lipcsey, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1987, p25. The Arrow Cross Party succeeded the National Will Party (*Nemzeti Akarat Pártja*) founded in 1935 by Ferenc Szálasi (*Romsics 2000*, p226).

<sup>1057</sup> On 24th August the first government headed by General Constantin Sănătescu was formed. From the same day onwards several hundred leading Hungarian figures in Southern Transylvania were rounded up and interred in various camps. See *Vincze I*, p13.

The terror-stricken Székely smallholders opened their gates and drove their livestock out into the streets in the hope that their families would be left alive.

Soon the "rescuers" appeared in the midst of the terrified population and promised that if they were to convert to Christianity, to change religion, they would come to no harm. Joining one or other "historical party" could also be advantageous.

It was in these circumstances that we strengthened and broadened our coalition with Romanian democracy.

The "Ploughman's Front" supporters<sup>1058</sup> did not ask us to renounce our religion. Quite the opposite: they are aware that whoever renounces his religion or his nationality is not a good Hungarian and can never become a good Romanian either.

The Romanian workers did not ask us to join their parties one by one. On the contrary: they were delighted to take note of the Hungarians of Bucharest organising within the framework of the Hungarian Popular Alliance. They approve of our founding both popular democratic organisations in villages with a mixed population and proclaiming the necessity of reconciliation in this way. Our Romanian allies are as aware as we are ourselves that a good friendship is not made by changing religion and nationality, but by showing mutual respect for each other's national and denominational character".<sup>1059</sup>

In his speech at the *Brassó/Braşov* assembly on 10th December 1944, Kurkó was careful to stress that the Hungarians were not angling for special treatment, which could all too easily be misconstrued:

"We are not fighting for seats in the Parliament. We only wish to give a voice to the beating of our people's heart. From here we wish to proclaim that in democratic Romania even today children are thrashed for speaking their native tongue at school. From here we proclaim and may these words reach the ears of the county leaders that there are still gendarmes who beat our brothers if they have the gall to organise.

Discrimination based on nationality still occurs.

We do not want exemptions and privileges, but we will not permit anyone to look upon us as second-class citizens. We want equality, free use of [our] language. The reopening of closed down schools, Hungarian sections in the state schools funded by

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<sup>1058</sup> Petru Groza's party rejoiced in the name of Ploughman's Front.

<sup>1059</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp27-28. The article dates from 19th November 1944.

the state. For our priests to hold sermons in Hungarian in the churches and for Romanian democracy to guarantee this for us..."<sup>1060</sup>

Kurkó fully backed Groza's initial measures at the first congress, welcoming the change in the terminology describing the Hungarians. As was also the case later this went far beyond mere semantics and betokened a shift in status:

"Our domestic policy consists of complete reconciliation and coalition with the Romanian people and the peoples living here. With all our strength as one man we fall in behind Petru Groza and his government because [...] with it a government has been placed at the head of Romania, which as one of its first deeds erased the term 'minorities' from the political dictionary."<sup>1061</sup> In Romania there are nationalities living peacefully. The democratic government with Prime Minister Petru Groza at its apex guarantees equal rights for all the citizens of Romania irrespective of their nationality. [...]

Romanian-Hungarian friendship will be the pledge ensuring that in the Danube Basin the peoples will find the road to safeguarding peace and shall never again be the instruments of any imperialism in subjugating other peoples. Romanian-Hungarian friendship will facilitate the fraternal joining of forces between all the peoples in our vicinity and their entry into the family of the peace-loving peoples of the world".<sup>1062</sup> Between 15th and 18th November 1945 the "100" Executive Committee (elected once a year and so-called because of the number of its members) convened in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş*. Vasile (*László*) Luka made use of the opportunity to persuade the Hungarians that a root and branch change had taken place in Romania's policy towards its minorities, highlighting positive developments, such as the emergency funding package for the Universities in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* and *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş*, the opening of the theatre in the latter, the payment of Hungarian teachers' salaries as of the first of the month, the amendment to the CASBI decision so that only those returnees who had been guilty of proven fascist activities would not have their property released to them and that the military authorities had been issued strict instructions in conjunction with the amnesty. Luca expressed his

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<sup>1060</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp50-51.

<sup>1061</sup> As prescribed in law 629 of 6th August 1945. See Rudolf Joó, *op. cit.*, p44 and for the full text of the legislation, pp126-129. Demeter correctly indicates that the term "minority" presupposes a ruling majority and suggests that not every citizen has an equal stake in political power. *Op. cit.*, p44.

<sup>1062</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp53-54.

opinion to the effect that equality for the Hungarians would continue to grow in direct proportion with the level of support they were willing to give to Romanian democracy in the course of rebuilding the country. Groza seconded this, though he did not attempt to sweep the problems under the carpet, reassuring the participants that his government would always take a stand against those who maintained that the policy towards the nationalities endangered the Romanians. By way of response the speakers from the MNSZ took stock of the difficulties. Edgár Balogh, head of the culture section, gave a 25-point summary of the most important issues relating to education. In determining the MNSZ's stance on the vital question of the run-up to the peace treaty, Kurkó's view carried the day. He renounced Transylvanian autonomy and territorial revision, which severely dented the organisation's popularity. In its communication, the committee called for relations with Hungary to be put on so close a footing that no passports would be required to travel between the two countries, repudiating the idea of a population exchange and declaring that the solution to the nationality issue lay in consolidating democracy rather than redrawing frontiers.<sup>1063</sup>

The text unleashed protests from the Hungarian Committee of the Social Democratic Party, which deplored the steamrolling of any rival view: "A stop must be put to that one-sided Romanian policy, which goes far beyond the moderation demanded by the historical situation and attempts by means of compromises and obscuring reality to represent and lead a democratic multitude of almost two million from the nationality".<sup>1064</sup>

Kurkó hit back by arguing that Transylvania had always belonged to the Transylvanians themselves and hence the accusations levelled against the MNSZ concerning how it had sold Transylvania down the river shot wide of the mark: "We are aware that the Transylvanian nationality question is not a question of frontiers, but of the bolstering of democracy, of the genuine attainment of national equality, the question of the dissolving of frontiers. We do not approve of any ambition be it Hungarian or Romanian in origin, which would once again make

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<sup>1063</sup> Lipcsey on the MNSZ, pp105-106 and *Vincze I*, p37.

<sup>1064</sup> From 25th December 1945, quoted in Lipcsey on the MNSZ, p106. Bishop Áron Márton sent a letter to Groza objecting to the assessment on behalf of over a million Roman Catholics in January 1946. *Op. cit.*, p106.

Transylvania a hotbed of belligerent conflict using methods similar to the Vienna Award.

As sincerely as we acknowledge the need to cooperate with progressive Romanian democracy we equally openly and sincerely wish for close economic, cultural and political cooperation with Hungary, the abolition of the obligation to use passports and the dissolution of the customs frontiers. This cooperation will create the preconditions for the two peoples of Transylvania to be forged together in indissoluble unity by making centuries of animosity disappear".<sup>1065</sup>

In an article in *Világosság*, one of the MNSZ's dailies,<sup>1066</sup> Edgár Balogh roundly condemned the detractors of the MNSZ:

"Given that there are malicious individuals who, capitalising on the dissatisfaction, keep on seriously condemning the Hungarian Popular Alliance and call into question its *raison d'être* it would be good [...] for us to cast our minds back to the significance of the battle and the espousal by the pioneers of this organisation of the cause through which they were able to guarantee survival, the mere existence of the Hungarians of Romania and the preservation of the population on the side of Romanian democracy in the face of the clamour for murder, plunder and expatriation.

In the wake of the democratic Groza government's assumption of power and the inclusion of Northern Transylvania under Romanian public administration the Hungarian Popular Alliance cannot have a different aim to the one it had at the beginning: it must ensure that the segment of our population that has been placed under Romanian administration comes to no harm, that public order returns and that the rights of the Hungarians to their property and work are not curtailed either illegally or legally".<sup>1067</sup>

Kurkó was adamant about there being little alternative to the present course:

"...either [we go] back to the past, back to the Calvary the people of Transylvania lived through during the 22 years and then the four [...].

All the errors of the past must be set to rights and that includes all those mistakes made by Romanians and Hungarians alike, which the Count Bethlens and Manius of

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<sup>1065</sup> These ideas were clearly influenced by Groza's "etherialisation" of the borders between the two countries. *Op. cit.*, p70 and quotation p75.

<sup>1066</sup> The others being *Népi Egység*, *Szabad Szó*, *Falvak Népe*, *Jövő* and *Utunk*. See Lipcsey: *A Romániai Magyar Népi Szövetség*, p109.

<sup>1067</sup> Edgár Balogh: *Hidverők Erdélyben 1944-46*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1985, p93.

this world do not want remedied. Because if it were up to Maniu the Hungarians could pick up their beggar's pouches and their 40 kilo packages and walk!<sup>1068</sup> This is the truth! This is the point that Maniu wants and which the Hungarian landowning reactionaries want to serve up to win back their old position. The democratic government, our government, the people's government wants something different to them! Our government wants it to be impossible to drive out either the Romanians or the Hungarians. Just as you cannot take the Transylvanian Romanian from the hills and settle him in Oltenia you cannot take the Transylvanian Székely and take him to the Great [Hungarian] Plain".<sup>1069</sup>

Kurkó was uncompromising in his message that the Hungarians were at home in Transylvania and not there on sufferance:

"It is not possible to divide Transylvania either from an ethnographic or an economic point of view without this damaging its peoples. We are not guests in Transylvania. We want to go on living here in the future and know that Transylvania will only fulfil its historical vocation if it once again assumes the role it played over centuries and becomes a warrior of that spirit in the fight for liberty, which it championed on so many occasions in the course of its past".<sup>1070</sup>

That the MNSZ had its finger on the pulse of the Hungarians it represented and sought to remedy the most glaring injustices in good faith can be illustrated by its ceaseless campaigning and its own proposal for regulating the rights of nationalities approved by the congress at *Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc*, which Kurkó presented to the Parliament on 7 December 1946.<sup>1071</sup> Many of its provisions focused on equal representation of Hungarians in keeping with their relative numerical strength throughout all echelons of local and central government and on fair allocation of budgetary resources to Hungarian churches. As far as language use was concerned, in counties, districts and communities where at least 15 per cent of the local population was Hungarian, Hungarian-speakers would have the choice to conduct their business with the authorities in their mother tongue and where the

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<sup>1068</sup> The reference is to the baggage limit imposed on Hungarians resettled under the population exchange. They were forced to leave everything else behind.

<sup>1069</sup> *Op. cit.*, p79.

<sup>1070</sup> *Op. cit.*, p83.

<sup>1071</sup> He repeated his request that it be given legal status on 12th, but to no avail. *Vincze I*, p51 and Lipcsey on the MNSZ, p111.

Hungarians made up at least 65 per cent administrative transactions would automatically take place in Hungarian. A Hungarian Cultural Council would operate within the MNSZ and the specialist Ministries would be required to consult it for an opinion prior to the issuing of any decree or other measure related to the Hungarians. Similarly a National Council for the Nationalities should be set up within the Nationalities Ministry, half of whose members ought to be Hungarian alongside a network of County Nationalities Commissions once again with as many Hungarian members as the local population justified. These new bodies would be responsible for investigating and redressing grievances brought before them by the nationalities and would be officially recognised as the competent forum for so doing.<sup>1072</sup>

The tide turned against the MNSZ with the publication of Vasile (*László*) Luka's article *The Path of the Hungarians of Romania* in *Igazság*, the Romanian Communist Party's Hungarian-language daily on 22 May 1947, which decried the MNSZ and Hungarian aspirations to independence as isolationism from the other nations within Romania and wrote off the concept of popular unity from below as a delusion, indeed as an indication of association with Hungarian reactionaries.<sup>1073</sup> Collective rights were superfluous and the various institutions aimed at defending them were redundant. Hence the merger of the two central organisations representing 1200 agricultural cooperatives, *Szövetség in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* and *Kaláka in Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* with INCOOP, the Romanian National Cooperative Institute on 24 June 1947.<sup>1074</sup> Events in Hungary<sup>1075</sup> exacerbated the situation, triggering attacks on intellectuals in the Hungarian organisations. In order to salvage what it could, the Executive Committee met in Bucharest where it established a

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<sup>1072</sup> Rudolf Joó, *op. cit.*, pp141-143. For the full text of the draft see *op. cit.*, pp130-140 and Lipcsey on the MNSZ, pp106-117.

<sup>1073</sup> See Lipcsey on the MNSZ, p113.

<sup>1074</sup> See Süle, *op. cit.*, p217. In spite of a unanimous vote against such a move at the Hungarian Cooperatives congress in April of the previous year.

<sup>1075</sup> The arrest of Béla Kovács (Secretary General of the Smallholders Party), the accusations against members of the Magyar Közösség and the Smallholders. See Lipcsey on the MNSZ, pp113-114 and *A fordulat évei. Politika, képzőművészet, építészet, 1947-1949*, edited by Éva Ständeisky, Gyula Kozák, Gábor Pataki and János M. Rainer. 1956-os Intézet, Budapest, 1998, pp122-128. The Magyar Közösség was the collective name given to the purported members of a plot against the republic, fabricated as a means of breaking up the Smallholders Party and thereby clearing the way for the establishment of a one-party state. It was rumoured that the conspirators had links with Transylvania.



Political Secretariat comprising seven members. Under the new motto of "popular regeneration" it issued a statement declaring that "any political, cultural or economic isolation from the ambitions of Romanian progressive democracy can only lead to the atrophying of our popular strength from within, the weakening of our fighting resolve and the hindrance of democratic centralisation". Increased vigilance and a purging of the ranks was therefore on the agenda. The resolution also protested strongly against the Danube block policy pursued in the interests of Imperialism and directed against the Soviet Union<sup>1076</sup>.

Whilst the outlook for the Hungarians deteriorated the pattern, which was to become so typical of the decades ahead, whereby small concessions were made to sweeten the pill of the substantial underlying turn for the worse emerged<sup>1077</sup>.

By the time that the MNSZ moved to Bucharest on 1st January 1948, it had begun to lose touch with the Hungarians<sup>1078</sup>. The peace treaty had been a success for Romania and a mutual friendship treaty with Hungary was ratified by the Parliament on 17 February. On the 27th, the MNSZ joined the Romanian Workers Party, the Ploughman's Front and the National People's Party in the National Democratic Front, which won 93.2 per cent of the votes at the elections on 28th March effectively marking the onset of one party rule along Stalinist lines<sup>1079</sup>.

The new constitution contained four passages directly relating to the nationalities: article 16, which stated that all Romanian citizens irrespective of sex, nationality, race, religion or degree of culture were equal before the law; article 17 prohibiting any form of racial or anti-nationality hatred; article 18 granting full rights to vote and be elected and article 24, which guaranteed the right of the nationalities to use their mother tongue and organise teaching in that language at all levels of education, stipulated that in districts where nationalities lived alongside Romanians the language of the former could also be used orally and in writing for administrative and judicial

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<sup>1076</sup> Lipcsey on the MNSZ, p114 and *Vincze I*, p56.

<sup>1077</sup> Cf. *Medvetánc*, p78.

<sup>1078</sup> Although it was not officially dissolved until the spring of 1953, its role was reduced to rubber-stamping decisions taken from on high. *Vincze I*, p89.

<sup>1079</sup> László Balogh, *Románia története*, Aula Kiadó, Budapest, 2001, pp120, 141 and 148-9. The Ploughman's Front was never given the assistance in reorganising it had been promised by the Romanian Workers' Party after it dutifully cleansed itself of kulaks in 1949. The King had already abdicated on 30 December 1947.

purposes and that civil servants were to be recruited from the relevant nationality or any other as long as they were familiar with the language spoken by the local population. Romanian language and literature were compulsory subjects in all schools.<sup>1080</sup> According to János Demeter the socialist nature of the constitution itself meant that rights and duties do not accrue from national, religious or class status, but from the socially valued work performed.<sup>1081</sup> The seal of approval it was given by the Hungarians was construed as a vindication of the Romanian Workers Party's nationalities policy.<sup>1082</sup>

When Kurkó, János Demeter, Edgár Balogh and others were arrested on trumped-up charges of nationalism, conspiracy, links with László Rajk and influencing the peace negotiations on 3rd November 1949, the new Communist principle of classification was being rigorously applied.<sup>1083</sup> With Kurkó's fall from grace, the confident, indeed militant tone of appeals for equality and full respect of rights abated. Whereas Kurkó had the opportunity to blame fascist wolves in democratic clothing for the problems his fellow Hungarians had to cope with, the advent of a regime, which claimed to embody the epitome of benign rationalism and justice, stifled open debate on problems. Henceforward the candour that had been Kurkó's trademark was frowned upon: defending rights aroused suspicions of isolationism at best and revisionist propaganda at worst.

### 3.2 Erosion by Stealth: The Hungarian Autonomous Province

"In the long decades of exploitation and national oppression the hundreds of thousands of workers who were condemned to political, economic and cultural backwardness now have ample opportunity to enjoy the protective warmth and love of the homeland, the enormous assistance of our Party".<sup>1084</sup>

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<sup>1080</sup> Rudolf Joó, *op. cit.*, pp108-109.

<sup>1081</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp86-87.

<sup>1082</sup> László Balogh, *op. cit.*, p149.

<sup>1083</sup> Lipcsey on the MNSZ, p117.

<sup>1084</sup> Miklós Dános: *Marosszéki Krónika. Riportok a Magyar Autonóm Tartományból. Állami Irodalmi és Művészeti Kiadó, Bukarest, 1953, p4. On the HAP, see also Kolar, pp268-272.*

The new Constitution adopted by the Grand National Assembly on 24th September 1952 contained one significant innovation in its Article 19: "The Hungarian Autonomous Province of the People's Republic of Romania is formed from the territory inhabited by the compact Székely Hungarian population; the Hungarian Autonomous Province possesses an autonomous public administration, which is elected by the inhabitants of the Autonomous Province. The HAP comprises the following *rajons*: Csík/Ciuc, Erdőszentgyörgy/Sîngeorgiu de Pădure, Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni, Kézdivásárhely/Tîrgu Secuiesc, Maroshévíz/Toplița, Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureș, Régen/Reghin, Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfîntu Gheorghe, Székelyudvarhely/Odorheiu Secuiesc. The HAP's administrative centre shall be Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureș".<sup>1085</sup>

That the autonomy was more by name than nature was revealed by the following Article:

"The laws of the People's Republic of Romania and the decisions and decrees of the central bodies of state are mandatory in the territory of the HAP".<sup>1086</sup>

Finally, according to Article 21: "The Statute of the HAP shall be drawn up by the People's Council of the Autonomous Province and submitted to the Grand National Assembly of the People's Republic of Romania for approval".<sup>1087</sup>

This never happened.

Only 35 per cent of the total Hungarian population in Romania lived in the Autonomous Province with the remaining Székely regions transferred to provinces where Romanians were in the majority.<sup>1088</sup> The HAP's documents and enactments appeared in Hungarian and Romanian language versions as might be expected, but it

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<sup>1085</sup> *A Román Népköztársaság Alkotmánya*. A Román Munkáspárt kiadványa, Bukarest, 1952, pp16-17. Quoted in Ildikó Lipcsey: *35 éve alakult az erdélyi Magyar Autonóm Tartomány (1952-1968)*. In: *Kritika*, 1987, September edition, pp6-9, p7. Henceforth Lipcsey on the MAT. The establishment of the HAP had been preceded by the administrative reform of September 1950, which had reproduced the Soviet model of provinces and *rajons*, setting up 11 provinces in Transylvania in place of the 22 counties. See Gábor Vincze: *A nemzeti kisebbségtől a "magyar nemzetiségű románok"-ig. Negyvenöt év Romániai magyarságpolitikájának vázlata*. Limes, Tatabánya, 1998, issue 4. The pagination cited throughout pertains to a manuscript copy of this article in my possession presented to me by the author: p11. Henceforward, Vincze II.

<sup>1086</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

<sup>1087</sup> *Op. cit.*, p7.

<sup>1088</sup> *Hetven év*, p66 and Vincze II, p11.

gradually became obvious that the rights enshrined in the Nationalities Statute only held sway within the new province, as bilingual signs disappeared and the use of Hungarian in dealings with the local authorities became increasingly problematic outside its frontiers.<sup>1089</sup> On the cultural front, the Hungarian section of the *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* Institute of the Dramatic Arts was moved to *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* in the summer of 1954 and the *Literary Almanach* (*Irodalmi Almanach*), which had been published in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* was discontinued in February 1953 only to reappear a year later in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* under the title of *Word of Truth* (*Igaz Szó*).<sup>1090</sup> The HAP was therefore an exercise in dissimulation, a Trojan horse wheeled into the midst of the Hungarians to convince them that they indeed had a rightful place and that they were not expected to surrender their identity and melt anonymously into the greater entity of the Romanian nation.

On 29th January 1953 in *Truth* (*Igazság*), the Communist Party daily printed in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*, Gheorghiu-Dej summarily announced that the nationalities issue in Romania had been solved, a tactical masterstroke obviating the need for independent political representation of the Hungarians. The leaders of the MNSZ drew the relevant conclusion and dissolved the organisation in March of 1953.<sup>1091</sup> The HAP was a goldmine in terms of propaganda opportunities, affording the Party the perfect opportunity to blow its own trumpet and this was milked for all it was worth. The representations of its Hungarian minority, intended for consumption by the Hungarian audience in the run-up to the elections of 30th November 1952, are steeped in the “pure” Communist principle of classification (as opposed to its later nationalistically-coloured manifestation). Hence the contrast between the capitalist past and Communist present is expressed in conventionalised antithetical pairs such as backwardness/progress; ignorance/enlightenment; culture reserved for the elite/culture accessible to the masses; poverty/prosperity and inhumanity/paternalistic nurturing. Each actor in the drama is named individually to lend authenticity and local colour to the text, yet features only by virtue of his function, the defining moment of his social interaction with others, which slots neatly into the approved

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<sup>1089</sup> See *Hetven év*, p68 and *Vincze II*, p11.

<sup>1090</sup> See *Vincze II*, p12.

<sup>1091</sup> See *Vincze II*, p12.

categories (such as outstanding worker or peasant on a cooperative). Thus in spite of the ostensibly Transylvanian setting the reader is presented with stereotypes. What matters is not nationality, but harmonious cooperation between industrial and agricultural workers, reaffirming the Party's monopoly on definitions. The Székelys of the HAP are uniformly depicted as loyal Communists fully embracing the ideals of the Party and embodying the virtues of self-sacrifice and total dedication to the cause in some of the few resoundingly positive portrayals of the Hungarian minority where difference is not conceptualised as problematic.

The HAP represented a triumph of rationalism over antiquated bourgeois nationalism, which had been nothing more than grist to the mill of unscrupulous exploiters:

"The creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Province is a major success of the people's democracy, which consummates the legal equality of national minorities.

'A highly significant achievement of our popular democratic system - the Manifesto of the Central Council of the Popular Democratic Front tells us - as set out in the new Constitution is the guarantee of complete equality before the law of all workers, irrespective of race and nationality. We swept away the system of the ruthless oppression of national minorities. As a result of the Leninist-Stalinist policy of our people's democracy the national minorities, once oppressed, kept in a state of terror and derided now enjoy equal rights with the Romanian people with their own schools where teaching is provided in their mother tongue, books, newspapers and theatres, they use their own languages in local government and in courts. The establishment of the Hungarian Autonomous Province has even more firmly cemented the unity of the workers in our homeland, regardless of their nationality. The Romanian people is building Socialism in fraternal cooperation with the national minorities'. (...)

The road along which the national minorities of our country proceeded this far was, however, a long and arduous one. Ending the system of merciless oppression of national minorities is the fruit of our Party's unremitting struggle. In the era of bourgeois-landowner dominated Romania the Communist Party of Romania stood alone in fighting for the complete legal equality of the national minorities and this was true from the moment of its foundation. In 1933, on the occasion of the notorious

Craiova<sup>1092</sup> trial Comrade Gheorghiu-Dej gave the following response to the attempts at chauvinist agitation on the part of the stagers of the court martial:

"The conscious working class does not draw any distinctions on the basis of race or nationality. In the workshops the Romanian worker suffers in exactly the same way as the Jewish or Hungarian worker whilst the factory owners do not take into account of whether the workers are Romanian or not when making redundancies and slashing wages".<sup>1093</sup>

In spite of this protestation that the Hungarian, Jewish and Romanian workers were all united in victimhood, the ethnic designations used to describe them still point to the persistence of a sense of difference between them.

The earthly paradise of the HAP was the culmination of years of costly struggle by the Party. The emphasis on better facilities as an index of progress is typical of the Communist principle of classification:

"Today, when we behold the schools, children's homes, community centres, the well-equipped forest huts, the centres providing first aid, the canteens and libraries in the towns, villages and timber-producing areas of this province, we cannot help but be reminded of the battles fought in the *Gyergyó/Depresiunea Giurgeului* basin and the entire *Maros/Mureş* valley: the strikes and agitation for higher wages at the head of which stood the Communists".<sup>1094</sup>

Industrialisation was the key to progress and the Party had consistently taken pains to spread its material benefits to the Székelys. For example: "One of South-East Europe's largest and most modern furniture factories, *Géza Simó*<sup>1095</sup> has been completed.

14 large undertakings comprising 256 production units have been set up in the province. These include 40 agricultural machinery leasing parks, several fruit and meat processing plants, quarries, lime-kilns, brick factories, asbestos manufacturaries,

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<sup>1092</sup> In 1933, Gheorghiu-Dej and companions organized a strike amongst railway workers in Grivița. They were prosecuted for this and Communist agitation. Gheorghiu-Dej was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour (Cf. Roper, *op.cit.*, p5).

<sup>1093</sup> Károly Balla: *A Testvériség Jegyében. Riport a Magyar Autonóm Tartományból.* Állami Irodalmi és Művészeti Kiadó. Bukarest, 1952, pp3-4.

<sup>1094</sup> *Op. cit.*, p6.

<sup>1095</sup> Simó (1870-1946) was one of Transylvania's most prominent theoretical and practical Marxists. In 1921, he was a founding member of the Romanian Communist Party.

wood and iron processing works of various sizes, textile and clothes mills, pig fattening farms and rearing facilities for poultry, rabbits and silver foxes. Throughout the province the sawmills have been rebuilt and considerably extended. Our national Five Year Plan laid the foundations of modern industry in the Székely lands as well, where previously there had scarcely been any other form of industrial production apart from the timber industry [...]"<sup>1096</sup>

As if the grinding poverty and wretchedness of the dark days of tyranny were not enough, the poisonous tendrils of animosity between national groups spread rampant between the Romanians and Hungarians. This did not escape the keen attention of the Communists:

"On this issue, comrade Gheorgiu-Dej stated in his speech delivered in July of 1946: 'The Hungarian and Romanian forces of reaction, which had an equal interest in the bloody exploitation of Hungarian and Romanian workers and peasants, pursued a policy of chauvinism and stirring up hatred as a means of diverting the Transylvanian popular masses' attention from their economic, social and political demands'.

Life today, on the other hand, is ever more categorically being characterised by light and brightness. The electricity, which is now reaching the villages and which rapacious entrepreneurs are not making a fortune on, is radically altering the life of the villages. Ilyich's lamps are not only lighting the streets and houses, but are also driving away the darkness of the mind. Electrification in other words first and foremost paves the way for industrialisation, which in turn lends enormous impetus to cultural development".<sup>1097</sup>

In the eight years since the Communists had assumed power, 23 localities had been connected to the grid and more were due to be within the framework of the Five Year Plan. Between 1898 when electrification began and 1944, a period of 46 years a grand total of 45 local communities had benefited, a statistic clearly intended to illustrate that the Romanian Communist government's enlightened benevolence extended to the minority.<sup>1098</sup> Undaunted by the worst excesses of the enemies of state and society, such as Vasile (*László*) Luca, Gheorghiu-Dej's steady hand guides the

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<sup>1096</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp7-8.

<sup>1097</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp9-10.

<sup>1098</sup> *Op. cit.*, p10.

peasants and proletariat towards the pristine tomorrow the masses have dreamed of for centuries.<sup>1099</sup>

Advances had also been made in health care in the Hungarian Autonomous Province where the neglect and indifference of former times had been replaced with preventive programmes, vaccinations for children against TB and proper treatments. Whereas previously the number of clinics for mothers and children had been restricted to two (in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* and *CsíkSZereda/Miercurea-Ciuc* respectively, although the latter had no doctor), the administrative seat of every *rajon* was equipped with a hospital and an appropriate number of beds and manned by obstetricians, gynaecologists and paediatricians. Infant mortality had dropped to half the 1937 level as a result. Typhoid, goitre and venereal diseases were being effectively combated, as was cancer. Many industrial plants had their own hospitals and there was even a mobile dental clinic with its own electric generator and on one trip alone dealt with 800 patients.<sup>1100</sup>

As for culture, a delegation of British visitors had marvelled at Irén Barabás, a polisher at the *Géza Simó* furniture factory for her erudition in the plays of Shakespeare. Had they stayed longer, they could have attended the performance of the in house philharmonic along with some 400 of the staff.<sup>1101</sup> 463 community cultural centres, 61 reading rooms, 297 village sport collectives and 97 Red Corners<sup>1102</sup> offered study and recreational opportunities. In the third quarter of the year, 580,000 people had watched shows on Sundays and public holidays in the village cultural centres, over 90,000 had seen films in them and their books, along with those in the village libraries, were borrowed by over 35,000 regular readers. The total number of books available in the various libraries of the Province exceeded 168,000".<sup>1103</sup>

Of the 714 schools providing teaching over four and seven years, Hungarian-language tuition was laid on in 508. 158 of these had places for boarders. 71,055 children were receiving an education in Hungarian and the former premises of the military

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<sup>1099</sup> *Op. cit.*, p11.

<sup>1100</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp25-30.

<sup>1101</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp30-31.

<sup>1102</sup> Within factories, cultural centres and so on, space was set aside for workers to read Communist magazines and journals and lectures on Communist themes were held there at regular intervals.

<sup>1103</sup> *Op. cit.*, p33.



academy now housed the *Marosvásárhely/Tirgu Mures* Medical and Pharmaceutical Institute.<sup>1104</sup> An 11-hectare park contained a paediatric and a nerve clinic and the one-time riding school had been converted into one of the country's most modern sports halls, whilst the remaining clinics were spread over different buildings. Between 1945 and 1951 the number of teaching departments tripled, clinics doubled and students rose from 632 to 909.<sup>1105</sup> In 1950-51, 530 received a state scholarship; in 1952-53 this increased to 670 whilst in 1953-54 736, or three quarters of all the students, were granted one.<sup>1106</sup>

A more theoretical approach firmly anchored the creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Province in the continuum of Marxist-Leninist teachings, reviling the insidiousness of nationalism, which had for so long been allowed to drive a wedge between the cohabiting peoples:

"Poll position amongst the many great achievements catalogued and sanctified in the Draft Constitution of our working people's PRR is occupied by the democratic solution to the national question on the basis of the complete legal equality of the national minorities with the Romanian people, a historical attainment of the people's democratic system.

The foundation of the Hungarian Autonomous Province of the PRR, stipulated by our Draft Constitution, is a further manifestation of how our Party consistently employs the Leninist-Stalinist national policy. It is a further measure aimed at drawing the bonds of friendship and fraternity between the Romanian working people and the Hungarian workers or those belonging to other nationalities even more closely together and thereby strengthening the People's Republic of Romania".<sup>1107</sup>

The evils of the nationalist principle of classification were plain for all to see:

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<sup>1104</sup> The statistics varied from source to source. For example, the Romanian Communist Party leaflet discussed below state that in the *rajons* of what was formerly known as *Maros/Mures* Province there were 318 primary schools, 14 secondary schools concentrating on technical subjects, five secondaries and six vocational schools. See *A Magyar Autonóm Tartomány Létrehozása. A Párt Lenini-Sztálini Nemzeti Politikájának Újabb Sikere*, Román Munkáspárt (authors unattributed), Bucharest, 1952, p23.

<sup>1105</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op. cit.*, pp35-36.

<sup>1106</sup> Miklós Dános, *Marosszéki Krónika. Riportok a Magyar Autonóm Tartományból*, Állami Irodalmi és Művészeti Kiadó, Bukarest, 1953, p19.

<sup>1107</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op.cit.*, p5.

“In the interests of executing its designs to maintain its class rule and subjugate peoples the bourgeoisie makes use of the policy of sowing the seeds of hatred between peoples and nations, that of nationalism [...]. Bourgeois nationalism is the principle weapon of the bourgeoisie, which it deploys in an attempt to put the workers of its own nation in tow to its policy, to distract the proletariat and all workers from the class struggle against exploitation on the pretext that everyone who belongs to the same nation, pillaged and pillaged alike, are "brothers" as it were. With the aid of nationalism the bourgeoisie at the same time strive to engender discord between workers of different nationalities, to pit them against each other so that they bicker amongst themselves and can all be kept in the chains of slavery the more easily”.<sup>1108</sup>

The superiority of Communism resided not only in its liberation of oppressed workers, but in its more sympathetic insight into the problems faced by minorities: “The working class sets its splendid ideology of proletarian internationalism against the bourgeoisie's contemptible policy and ideology of nationalism in the battle fought to liberate all workers from the yoke of capitalism by showing international solidarity and brotherliness.

[...] National minorities had a dual yoke weighing on their shoulders: the yoke of capitalist-landowner exploitation and the yoke of national oppression.

The Romanian bourgeoisie fuelled and fomented chauvinism against the Hungarians, anti-Semitism and other forms of rousing national hatred and the Romanian bourgeois-landowner state adopted nationalism as its official policy. The objective of this policy was to conceal from the working people the true cause of its sufferings, to prevent the Romanian workers and the workers from the national minorities from uniting in the fight for bread, freedom and peace. Its purpose was to keep them apart and mercilessly oppress both of them.

The governments of the big factory owners, financiers and landowners issued over 400 laws and decrees with which they placed the national minorities at a disadvantage, persecuted them and withdrew every right and freedom from them.

(...)

The bourgeois-landowner regime pursued a policy of denationalising the national minorities. They banned or reduced to the absolute minimum teaching in the mother tongue, restricted the numbers of minority students in schools and in particular higher

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<sup>1108</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op.cit.*, p6.

education and savagely persecuted progressive national art and literature produced by the minorities".<sup>1109</sup>

The Romanian Communist Party had stood alone in denouncing the divisive and deleterious nationalistic slogans. It understood that the way to full equality for the national minorities was to put the workers in charge.<sup>1110</sup> Once in power, it had purged itself of imperialist agents and nationalist elements. The national minorities were represented in every important decision-making body, in the army, local government and the judiciary. Over 13,000 were members of the People's Councils and more than 3500 primary and secondary schools were at their disposal for bringing up their children with instruction in the relevant native language. Not only did the new Constitution guarantee equal rights to work, rest, an income and fundamental political freedoms, but it also outlawed chauvinism, racial hatred and all varieties of nationalist propaganda. Small wonder then that the socialist patriotism described so eloquently by Stalin had taken root in Romanian soil:

"Guaranteeing legal equality unites the entire working people, knitting them together even more tightly into one single, unified block. This is of enormous significance in consolidating the popular democratic Romanian state, in the defence of the independence and sovereignty of our People's Republic [...].

*For this reason the creation of the Hungarian Autonomous Province, like any other of the achievements in the realm of coming up with a correct solution to the national question, are in keeping with the vital interests of the Romanian working people".*<sup>1111</sup>

Catering for the linguistic needs of the Hungarians would not mean that those of the local Romanians would be trampled underfoot:

"The fact that the bodies and institutions of the Hungarian Autonomous Province will make use of the language spoken amongst the broad masses of the people in the course of its activities will contribute to the creation of insoluble spiritual bonds between the masses and the executive.

None of this will encroach upon the rights of the Romanian workers living in this territory likewise guaranteed by the Constitution. They may use the Romanian language in their dealings with the different bodies and institutions. In the Romanian

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<sup>1109</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op.cit.*, pp5-11.

<sup>1110</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp13-14.

<sup>1111</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op. cit.*, pp17-19. Emphasis in original.

villages of the province Romanian-language schools, cultural centres etc. will be run. The Hungarian Autonomous Province must personify the unity and fraternity of workers of different nationality.

Providing regional autonomy within the public administration shores up the Hungarian working population's trust in the Romanian working people, brings the Hungarian working masses closer to the machinery of state, involves them in the work of the community and affords them even broader opportunities to participate in state leadership and the building of Socialism.

At the same time assuring regional administrative autonomy deals a crushing blow to the exploiters and their endeavours to delude the workers with the eyewash of so-called "national unity". All of the above leads to a strengthening of the Hungarian workers' class consciousness and fuses all workers together in even greater combative unity against exploiters of whatever nationality".<sup>1112</sup>

Clearly, isolationism was not on the agenda.

The duality of Party policy becomes apparent through examination of the various laws and decrees pertaining to Hungarian-language education. In the autumn of 1954, *Scînteia* and *Forward (Előre)* reported that over 2500 primary and secondary schools offered mother-tongue tuition to the various nationalities. The corresponding figure for the following school year was 2250.<sup>1113</sup> Teaching in technical subjects shifted to Romanian with the closure of Hungarian sections at the Mechanical Institute in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* from the 1953-4 term onwards and entrance examinations for the city's Agricultural College (Agronomic Institute) were only held in Romanian at the beginning of the 1955-56 academic year.<sup>1114</sup> In July of 1956, the Party and government passed a decision on improving general education introducing an eleven-grade system, adding a year to the final stage of secondary schooling. Primary schools (first to seventh grade) would have to organise a minimum number of parallel sections. Where this was not possible they were gradually phased out, drastically reducing the number of independent Hungarian-language schools in mixed population

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<sup>1112</sup> Román Munkáspárt, *op. cit.*, pp24-26.

<sup>1113</sup> *Scînteia*, 28th October, 1954, *Előre*, 29th October 1954 and 11th December 1955 respectively.

Quoted in *Hetven év*, p79.

<sup>1114</sup> *Vincze II*, p12.

areas. The one concession made teaching of Romanian compulsory as of the second grade of primary school (as opposed to first grade, which had been introduced in the education reform of 1948).<sup>1115</sup>

The fostering of cultural contacts with Hungary, already severely curtailed by virtue of the ratification of the Hungarian-Romanian convention on visas, which made private trips across the border virtually impossible,<sup>1116</sup> was further inhibited by a virtual drying up of the import of literary works, technical literature, dailies and periodicals.<sup>1117</sup>

Demonstrations of solidarity following the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 lead to negotiations being held between Hungarian intellectuals in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* and Miron Constantinescu, Secretary of the Central Committee. To quell unrest, which might potentially have sparked calls for territorial revision, some of the complaints were acted upon with, for example, Hungarian sections reopened in several towns, Hungarian reinstated as a subject at the Agricultural College, new journals including *Forward (Előre)* and, for children, *Ray of Sunshine (Napsugár)* authorised for publication as of the following year and a Nationalities Directorate formed within the Ministry of Education with László Bányai,<sup>1118</sup> formerly Rector of the Bolyai University, at its apex.<sup>1119</sup>

This easing off did not last beyond the suppression of the Revolution across the border with the arrest of sympathisers and a blanket accusation of revisionism levelled against the Hungarians. The blame for contamination of the young with bourgeois nationalism was laid at the door of the Hungarian schools, castigated as bastions of separatism. As a result, mergers between Romanian and Hungarian schools accelerated and in places where exclusively Hungarian-language schools had operated Romanian sections were added. The Nationalities Directorate was abolished

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<sup>1115</sup> *Hetven év*, p79.

<sup>1116</sup> *Vincze II*, p9.

<sup>1117</sup> *Vincze II*, p13.

<sup>1118</sup> One of the leading lights of the *Erdélyi Fiatalok* movement, Bányai (1907-1981) published poetry in the journal *Pásztortűz* and the literary supplement of *Ellenzék* as well as essays in *Helikon*. Having lost his job as a teacher at the Catholic secondary school in *Csikszereda/Miercurea-Ciuc* in 1933 because of his Communist convictions, he switched allegiances to *Korunk* and *Brassói Lapok*. From 1934 to 1940, he was secretary of MADOSZ and after 1945 he was a member of the *Magyar Népi Szövetség*'s Executive Committee.

in 1959 and in July of the same year Bolyai University in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* was combined with the Romanian Babeş University thereby losing its independence.

Professor László Szabedi (Hungarian language and literature), Deputy Rector Zoltán Csendes and his wife, Professor of Economics Miklós Molnár and student leader Sándor Tóth committed suicide in protest.<sup>1120</sup>

In 1958 two further developments contributed further to the worsening outlook for the Hungarians: the withdrawal of Soviet troops on 27th July<sup>1121</sup> and an official visit by a high profile delegation from Hungary, comprising János Kádár, Gyula Kállai, Antal Apró and Károly Németh. Its conclusion: "We have now gained first-hand experience of how legal equality for the nationalities has been achieved in every area of political, economic and cultural life, something we were already aware of and held in high esteem".<sup>1122</sup> This verdict was taken as a signal that Hungary had washed its hands of the minority and would not oppose stringent assimilation.

On 19th December 1960, Ceauşescu presented a bill proposing what were described as improvements to the administrative boundaries, a reform entailing the elimination or absorption of some *rajons*, the transfer of certain districts from one *rajon* to another, the granting of *rajon* status to selected cities and so on, affecting 18 provinces in all.<sup>1123</sup> The Hungarian Autonomous Province was rechristened the *Maros/Mureş* Autonomous Province. The *Sármás/Sărmaş* and *Ludas/Luduş* *rajons* were added to it from *Temesvár/Timişoara* in entirety and *Disco rajon* in part, alongside a complete village from *Brassó/Braşov* Province. At the same time *Sepsi/Gheorghe* and *Kézdi/Secuiesc* *rajons* were moved to the latter. The area of the Province thus increased from 759,000 to 802,000 square kilometres, but its Hungarian population shrank from 564,000 to 473,000 whilst the number of Romanian residents grew from 147,000 to 266,000. In 1962 the language of tuition at the Medical and Pharmaceutical Institute was changed to Romanian. The rate of industrialisation was

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<sup>1119</sup> *Hetven év*, p80 and *Vincze II*, pp13-14.

<sup>1120</sup> *Vincze II*, pp14-15; *Süle*, pp231-232 and *Hetven év*, pp73 and 79-80.

<sup>1121</sup> The way had been paved for this during the meeting of Soviet and Romanian heads of government between 26th November and 3rd December 1956 as a means of rewarding the latter for not rocking the boat and for their political support as evinced by holding Imre Nagy and his companions in confinement for several months. See *Süle*, pp229-230.

<sup>1122</sup> Quoted in *Vincze II*, p14 and *Hetven év*, p80.

<sup>1123</sup> Lipcsey on the MAT, p8.

slowed in order to encourage outward migration and at an extraordinary session of the Grand National Assembly on 27th April 1962 the early completion of the collectivisation process was mentioned.<sup>1124</sup> The death knell for the Province came in 1968 with the passing of a law prescribing that the average size of provinces should be around 6786 square kilometres and the average population 509,000.

*Háromszék/Trei-Scaune* became *Kovászna/Covasna*, the bulk of *Udvarhely/Odorhei* was attached to *Csík/Ciuc* and dubbed *Hargita/Harghita* and the remainder subsumed under *Maros/Mureş* and *Kovászna/Covasna*.<sup>1125</sup>

### 3.3 From Cohabiting Nationality to Romanian Workers of Hungarian Nationality

"We can joyfully say that our Party, which already at the time of its foundation emblazoned the words "fraternal unity of all workers without distinction of nationality" across its banner has forever solved the national question in Romania, guaranteeing equal rights for all the citizens of the homeland throughout every sphere of activity" Nicolae Ceauşescu, 20th September 1968.<sup>1126</sup>

In our appraisal of the Ceauşescu era, we shall be concentrating primarily upon the utterances of the *Conducător* himself because his speeches functioned as a blueprint for subsequent representations, the contributions to "debate" made by Hungarian minority politicians at public gatherings slavishly regurgitating the official line. Moreover, Ceauşescu's pronouncements usually heralded legislative programmes, his words quite literally becoming law.

At the Ninth Party Congress in 1965, Ceauşescu was installed as Gheorghiu-Dej's successor following the latter's death on 19th March. He profited from the occasion to give a speech, which ushered in a new ideological era:

"Owing to the difference in circumstances in which Communist and Workers' Parties carry put their activities - which are determined by the level of socio-economic

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<sup>1124</sup> Lipcsey on the MAT, p8; *Vincze II*, p15.

<sup>1125</sup> Lipcsey on the MAT, p9 and *Hetven év*, p68.

<sup>1126</sup> From his speech at the *Temesvár/Timişoara* assembly, quoted in *Medvetánc*, p141.

development and the historical and national peculiarities of their countries - it is natural for differences of opinion to arise as to the path to be followed in attaining political power and the building of Socialism and also that a wide variety of forms of action and methods should exist. The manner according to which each individual Party undertakes its tasks cannot be the object of dispute; each individual Party has an exclusive right to outline its political guidelines, the form and methods of its activities, to designate its aims and to apply creatively the universal truths of Marxist-Leninism whilst taking account of the specific circumstances of its country and in so doing contributing to the shared treasure trove of revolutionary thought and experience".<sup>1127</sup>

In the light of this, fostering relations based on mutual trust, respect and esteem between Parties was of the utmost importance. Romania's international policy was therefore founded on national sovereignty, independence, equality and non-interference in domestic affairs. The Socialist nation would promote greater unity rather than engendering strife:

"For a long time yet to come the nation and the state will form the foundation of the development of Socialist society. The development of the nation and the strengthening of the Socialist state corresponds to the objective demands of social life; not only is this not at odds with the interests of Socialist internationalism, but quite the opposite: it is entirely in keeping with these interests, with the international solidarity of the workers, Socialism and the cause of peace".<sup>1128</sup>

Alongside this declaration of the Romanian Party's intention to draw on the traditional nationalist source of legitimation (the cautious diplomacy of the wording with its lip-service to the internationalist principle was a sop to the Soviet Union to avoid incurring its displeasure), a new constitution was adopted by the Grand National Assembly on 21st August 1965, which mentions the minorities at three junctures: in article two where it states that all the country's workers without distinction of nationality build the Socialist system; in article 17, which talks of how all Romania's citizens, irrespective of nationality, race, sex or religion enjoy equal rights in every area of economic, political, legal and social life and in article 22, which reads:

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<sup>1127</sup> *A Román Kommunista Párt 9. kongresszusa*. Bukarest, 1965 július 19-24. Politikai Kiadó, Bukarest, pp82-83, quoted in László Balogh, *op. cit.*, pp243-244.

<sup>1128</sup> *Op. cit.*, p100. Quoted in László Balogh, p244.



"In the Socialist Republic of Romania the cohabiting nationalities are guaranteed the free use of the mother tongue and in addition books, newspapers, journals, theatres and all levels of education in their own mother tongue. In territorial-administrative units where apart from the Romanian population other nationalities also live, every body and institution shall also use the language of the nationality concerned orally and in writing and shall appoint officials from their ranks or amongst other citizens who know the language and lifestyle of the local population".<sup>1129</sup>

The commission for examining the problems of national minorities was resurrected under the supervision of the Central Committee secretariat<sup>1130</sup> with Ceaușescu formally presiding, although its actual running was in the hands of Miron Constantinescu initially and then Paul Nicolescu-Mizil. For the next three years its Hungarian members (Géza Domonkos, Lajos Takács and András Sütő amongst others) travelled to the provinces on several occasions to familiarise themselves with problems relating to teaching in the mother tongue, culture and so on. Having completed its survey, the commission submitted its draft proposals to the Central Committee, but no decisions of substance were taken and the commission faded into nothingness.<sup>1131</sup>

Ceaușescu's response to the events in Prague in 1968 with his stern condemnation of the breach of independence and sovereignty they implied and his insistence that Romania would not tolerate any encroachment on her territorial integrity, left the country isolated and in need of internal unity. In the interests of broadening its basis of support the Party took steps to win over the Hungarians. Ceaușescu met representatives of the Hungarian and German minorities who were able to speak frankly about their difficulties, calling for a new Nationalities Statute (even though the 1945 one was still in force) and during an official visit to the Székelys promised that the current Five Year Plan would make up for the inactivity of the past and tackle the economic backwardness that blighted their everyday lives.<sup>1132</sup> At the Party plenary in April, a pledge to extend use of minority languages in certain areas of culture and education, resulting in the foundation of the *Kriterion* publishing house

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<sup>1129</sup> *Hetven év*, p68.

<sup>1130</sup> It had ceased to function in 1959.

<sup>1131</sup> *Vincze II*, p17.

<sup>1132</sup> See Lipcsey on the MAT, p9. For this section, see also Süle, pp239-243 and *Vincze II*, pp17-20.

(although other publishers also printed books in Hungarian), the launch of the national weekly *A Hét* alongside local county newspapers, use of bilingual signs spread, Nationalities Secretariats were created within the Ministries of Education and Culture and television broadcasting in Hungarian began in 1971. Perhaps the most significant decision was that of setting up the National Councils for Workers of Hungarian Nationality as consultative organs taken at the meeting of the Central Committee at the end of October<sup>1133</sup> to contribute to the work carried out by Party and state bodies in political education, to encourage scientific, artistic and literary creativity in their mother tongues amongst the cohabiting nationalities and ensure ever more active collaboration on their part in formulating and implementing Party and state foreign policy. However, the Council did not have either the right of initiative or the right of veto.<sup>1134</sup> Their leaders were appointed by the government (the few prominent Hungarian intellectuals who had taken part were gradually squeezed out to make room for more compliant Party faithfuls) and they were convened erratically (with gaps between 1971 and 1974 and 1979 to 1983 for example). From 1974 onwards, their proceedings were conducted entirely in Romanian and became increasingly ritualistic, with the mandatory baroque displays of sycophancy towards Ceauşescu. Genuine problems encountered by the minority became invisible as their function was reduced to that of endorsing the political course steered at a given moment.<sup>1135</sup>

At the 1971 plenary of the National Council, Ceauşescu struck a positive note, reaffirming the importance of the forum as an opportunity for all workers to debate the main domestic and foreign policy issues. The 1966-1970 Five Year Plan had succeeded in more equitably and rationally distributing industrial capacity throughout the country, with neglected counties such as *Kovászna/Covasna*, *Hargita/Harghita*, *Szilágy/Sălaj* and *Szatmár/Satu Mare* as the main beneficiaries. By comparison to the urgency of eliminating the exploitative classes and transferring ownership of the means of production to the workers and peasants the number of pupils attending Hungarian-language schools paled into insignificance, although use of the mother tongue was not completely immaterial. Opportunities for the Hungarians to master

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<sup>1133</sup> Identical forums were established for the Germans, Serbs and later Ukrainians.

<sup>1134</sup> *Vincze II*, p19.

<sup>1135</sup> Cf. *Hetven év*, p69.

the achievements of science, culture and education had expanded with over 2290 Hungarian-language units at pre- and primary school level and more than 1060 Hungarian sections within the framework of other school types. Indeed the Hungarians were better off than the average in terms of access to schooling beyond the eighth grade. Over 11,500 teachers of Hungarian nationality were employed alongside 1430 headmasters and their deputies. All of this indicated that the Party took its duty to carry the constitution into effect so that individual ability and diligence would be the keys to broadening educational and professional horizons. Not content to rest on its laurels, the Party was striving to put the organisational preconditions in place for the nationalities to participate in the machinery of the state and in the running of companies.<sup>1136</sup>

Ceausescu then acknowledged that the Hungarians had been an integral part of Transylvanian society for some considerable time whilst downplaying their actual historical role:

"On other occasions I have already spoken about how we have raised the national issue and consequently the problem of the Romanian nationalities as well. In this regard we take the socio-historical realities as our starting point and these realities verify that for hundreds of years Romanians, Hungarians and Germans have lived and worked together in Transylvania, together creating everything that been attained in these surroundings, fighting together against the exploiters and oppressors, regardless of whether they were Romanians, Hungarians or from other nationalities. As I pointed out at the Council of Workers of German Nationality already it is difficult to distinguish between or accurately measure the contribution and successes of each individual nationality as they blend into an organic oneness. Even if a cultural establishment or monument bears the imprint of one or other nationality to a greater extent, these establishments and creations were nevertheless fashioned through the joint toil of those who lived and continue to live in these environs. Indeed it is in the final analysis very difficult to divorce Mihai Viteazul's victories<sup>1137</sup> [...] from the fact

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<sup>1136</sup> Nicolae Ceausescu: *Beszéd a Magyar Dolgozók Országos Tanácsának Plenáris Ülésén. 1971, március 12.* Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, 1971, pp6-14.

<sup>1137</sup> On the subject of Michael the Brave (ruler of Wallachia from 1593 to 1601), Lucian Boia writes:

"The way in which the myth of Michael the Brave took shape illustrates better than any other historical model the mutations which have taken place in Romanian consciousness. The prince, who managed for a short time (1599-1600) to rule the three territories that were to be united some three centuries later in

that thousands upon thousands of Székelys and other nationalities, Hungarians or Germans fought on the Romanian ruler's side [...]. The inhabitants of this region have always known that their interests are intertwined and that in order to create a life of freedom and independence everyone must cooperate and fight together against both the external oppressors and their own exploiters. This is the shared primary characteristic of this form of cohabitation. Historical scholarship must bear these circumstances in mind and must reflect the facts as they unfolded in all their complexity with the role played by the people and the masses in the development of society since we can only write a truly Marxist-Leninist history if we study and accentuate everything, which contributed and contributes to strengthening friendship and cooperation between the workers of our homeland! Let us take on board everything from our historical past, which is progressive, which unites the peoples and let us get rid of everything, which stands for the influence of the former ruling,

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modern Romania, begins to be perceived as a unifier only towards the middle of the nineteenth century. Such an interpretation is completely lacking in the historiography of the seventeenth-century chroniclers, and even in that of the Transylvanian School around 1800. What they emphasized, apart from the exceptional personality of Michael himself, were the idea of Christendom and his close relations with Emperor Rudolf" (*Boia*, p39. For the shift in meaning, see pp40-2). On 20<sup>th</sup> May 1595, the Wallachian boyars drove Michael into signing an alliance with Zsigmond Báthori placing Wallachia under the control of the Transylvanian Prince. Sinan Pasha was sent by the Porte to re-establish its authority in Wallachia, engaging Michael at Călugăreni. The Turks withdrew having incurred severe losses. In October, Báthori's Transylvanian troops, bolstered by units of the imperial army and Tuscan cavalry defeated the Turkish garrison at Tîrgoviște. Michael and Báthori crushed the Turkish rearguard, pushing it back south of the Danube. Having abdicated in favour of Rudolf II in return for ducal estates in Silesia in 1598, Báthori changed his mind, reoccupying his throne, only to leave it again in 1599. Under Polish pressure, he was replaced by his nephew, Cardinal András Báthori. Displeased by the latter's intention to bring Transylvania back into the Porte's fold, Michael successfully fought against him at *Nagyszeben/Sibiu (Șelimbăr)* in October. Having taken the citadel of Suceava in May 1600, he was entitled to call himself "prince of Wallachia, Transylvania and Moldavia". Such glory was short-lived. The Transylvanian nobility rose against him, supported by Rudolf II's general Giorgio Basta. Beaten in battle at *Miriszló/Mirăslău*, Michael pulled out of Transylvania. At this juncture, Zsigmond Báthori reappeared on the scene, breaking his promise to Rudolf II to stay away. He was re-elected as prince, but expelled by Basta and Michael now fighting on the same side. On 19<sup>th</sup> August 1601, Michael met his death at the hands of Basta's Walloon mercenaries at *Aranyosgyéres/Câmpia Turzii (Castellan)*, pp58-61 and *Kontler*, pp163-4). See also *Ofetea*, pp220-227 and *Prodan*, pp82-91.

exploiting classes. As one comrade here declared, let us set aside the myths, the nostalgia, the prejudices and look at the realities!"<sup>1138</sup>

Returning to education, the Party Secretary dressed assimilation in the garb of rationality, giving assurances that the deficiencies that had cropped up would be appropriately tackled:

"We must respect the freedom of choice for young people to decide which type of school they wish to attend and which language they wish to pursue their studies in! [...]

The reason I have broached this matter is that there are opinions - it is true that they have not been expressed here, but elsewhere - according to which we ought to compel young people to study in a given language. For example young Hungarians should only go to Hungarian schools. I believe that would be a serious error, a violation of the freedom and democratic right for everyone to select the form of education he wishes. Our responsibility is - and the Ministry of Education and the local bodies must live up to it - to generate the corresponding financial basis and make the necessary textbooks available so that young people may carry out their studies in the language they are most familiar with. [...] There is no "danger of isolationism" involved in this as some comrades have stated here, because in practice neither the Romanians, the Hungarians, the Germans nor anyone else can become isolated as they will go on living and working in the same county, town, village, company or cooperative! [...] Young people themselves will understand what would be advantageous for them to learn in their own language and what would be better to learn in Romanian because all social activity and the achievements of science and culture will become inaccessible to them if they do not know the language of the country they live in. [...] The question of mastering the Romanian language ought not therefore to be treated as it being compulsory to learn an extra language, but at the end of the day mastering Romanian is linked to guaranteeing equality proper. If a young person cannot make himself understood on leaving his community or county he will not feel genuinely equal and free".<sup>1139</sup>

Within the domain of political education, greater attention had to be paid to the problems encountered in the course of developing a Socialist society in Romania,

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<sup>1138</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp15-17.

<sup>1139</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp21-22.

including the role and the future of the Socialist nation and the national question, particularly since nations would survive well into the Communist age, maintaining their position as an important socio-historical category and as one of the determining factors of social progress:

"In this context we must tackle the issue of the cohabiting nationalities. Given that the nation has a long future ahead of it, the same consequently applies to existence of the nationalities. [...] Let us examine the part that the nationalities will play in the long term within the framework of our state. As I mentioned earlier the nationalities will continue to occupy their own clear and well-defined place and role and for a long time yet to come will retain their own individuality as is also true of the nations".<sup>1140</sup>

Romania's problems could only hope to be solved by the country's own workers without any outside interference from whichever quarter, although this was not a sign of exclusiveness or isolationism from other states. On the contrary, Romania sought to foster multilateral cooperation with other Socialist nations founded on mutual respect and non-intervention in domestic affairs.<sup>1141</sup>

That the underlying trend favouring enforced assimilation had not been jettisoned was made apparent by statements such as the following dating from a year earlier:

"In the work and the common battle fought for the building of Socialism, the friendship between the Romanian people and the cohabiting nationalities has ascended to a higher level. Every major success in the development of Socialism is the opus of all the workers of our homeland without distinction of nationality. The constant strengthening of this fraternity forms an inseparable part of the process of homogenising our Socialist society".<sup>1142</sup>

Similarly the decision by the Communist Party's 1972 national conference stated:

"The National Conference appreciates that these new features [crystallisation of higher ethics and evolution of the new Socialist man, shortening of the distance between town and country, gradual disappearance of the classes, social homogenisation and the blurring of the major distinctions between physical and

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<sup>1140</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp24-25.

<sup>1141</sup> *Op. cit.*, p26.

<sup>1142</sup> In: *Az Egységes Román Nemzeti Állam Megteremtése. (Románia Elnöke Társadalompolitikai Gondolkodásából)*, Bukarest, 1984. Quoted (without page reference) in Süle, p243.

intellectual work] will not entail the disappearance of the nation, but will lay down the foundations for its elevation to a higher level and will lead to the emergence of a new type of nation, the Socialist nation, which is incomparably stronger and more homogenous than the bourgeois nation".<sup>1143</sup>

Also, echoing Ceaușescu's 1971 speech:

"The National Conference takes as its starting point the fundamental principle that the prospects for the long-term existence of the Socialist nation mean that the nationalities will retain their distinguishing features for a long time to come and that simultaneously the historical process of moving closer together is unfolding, which will become more pronounced in the future. For this reason work must be carried out unwaveringly to guarantee the complete equality of all workers, with no distinction based on nationality in the interests of ensuring that society should become ever more emphatically homogenous in terms of both social and national character on the road to building a uniform, Communist system".<sup>1144</sup>

### 3.4 Nationalist in Form and Content: The "July Theses"

The turning point came with what has been nicknamed the "mini cultural revolution" in the wake of Ceaușescu's visit to China in 1971, spawning the "July theses". One of the tasks prescribed for the Party was resolutely repelling all manifestations of nationalism, although state-sponsored majority nationalism was exempted in practice.<sup>1145</sup> The floodgates had now been opened for blatantly discriminatory laws, one of the first of which, decree 273 of 13th March 1973, laid down the parameters for setting up classes for children to be taught in their mother tongue in primary schools. Whereas at least 25 such pupils had to be enrolled to justify the creation of a separate class, Romanian sections had to be opened in all schools where Hungarian was the language of instruction independently of the number of Romanian-speaking

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<sup>1143</sup> *A Román Kommunista Párt Országos Konferenciájának Határozata a Szocialista Nemzet Felvirágoztatásáról és a Nemzeti Kérdésről Románia Szocialista Köztársaságban.* In: *A Román Kommunista Párt dokumentumai. A román nép és az együttlakó nemzetiségek testvérisége.* Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, 1973, p16. Also quoted in *Medvetánc*, p144.

<sup>1144</sup> *Op. cit.*, p20. Also quoted in *Medvetánc*, p144.

<sup>1145</sup> *Vincze II*, p21.

pupils enrolled. For secondary school classes to be taught in Hungarian, 36 pupils was the minimum.<sup>1146</sup>

At the plenary of the National Council in 1974, on the 30th anniversary of Romania's liberation from the clutches of fascism, Ceaușescu returned to the issue of language and education:

"...in today's circumstances we should not merely and not in the first instance be looking at how education is progressing in one language or another - although this does have its own significance - but mainly at the content of education, independently of the language the knowledge is being expounded in. At the same time we must make allowances for the fact [...] that the young people of today and tomorrow, the builders of Socialism and Communism, must have unlimited and unimpeded opportunities to work in any part of the country in any branch of activity. (...) It is also a necessity for the citizens of Romania to know the Romanian language. If someone would like to be a metalworker, he obviously has to go to

*Hunyad/Hunedoara* or *Galaț* to find employment. We cannot build foundries in every county! If someone wants to work in a nuclear power station, if we build one, let's say in *Hargita/Harghita* - which is as a matter of fact an intention of ours in the long term - he will have to speak a language there. We cannot organise factory work with the collaboration of interpreters. I would like you to interpret my words correctly. I have already spoken on the subject, but I get the impression that certain comrades, although their intentions are good, are still prisoners of the old mentality stemming back from the old days of inequality. They do not understand that something has changed in this country; that something is ceaselessly changing. Taking care to provide for the conditions necessary for teaching in the relevant native language should not be allowed to lead to a situation in which young people are inhibited from learning Romanian because the acquisition of a language really does offer them a means of working in any field of activity".<sup>1147</sup>

The cohabiting nationalities were almost spoilt for choice when it came to publications. The various Hungarian-language newspapers had a print run in excess of 500,000 and literary works were also produced in sizeable editions. Where

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<sup>1146</sup> *Medvetánc*, pp133-134.

<sup>1147</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu: *Beszéd a Magyar és Német Nemzetiségű Dolgozók Tanácsainak Együttes Ülésén. 1974, április 5.* Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, pp13-14.



complaints had arisen was in conjunction with technical and specialist books, although many of these were only available in English, Russian or other foreign languages and even translations into Romanian were not commissioned without due justification as it was often more expedient to read them in the original. There were further problems to grapple with:

"As far as the paper question is concerned, I do not know whom I should listen to first, the Hungarian or German nationalities or the Romanians as every one of them is calling for more paper. One must comprehend that paper is not a language question, but an economic problem and has to be looked at accordingly, bearing the current position on the world market in mind. We import paper [...]. On the international market paper is put up for sale at prices, which would demand that we raise the price of our newspapers and journals several times over. I do not think anyone wants that. One has to understand therefore that there are also issues, which go beyond national peculiarities, which are linked to the raw materials crisis and this includes paper. [...] It is self-explanatory that if we reduce consumption of paper in general then this measure applies to everyone. [...] Nobody can complain that the good and popular works appear in editions, which are too small. It is natural that books intended for the smaller Hungarian or German audiences should be printed in fewer copies, but perhaps we should not mechanically draw a comparison between the number of books and the size of the population".<sup>1148</sup>

Once again, assimilation was depicted as objective rationality.

Nor did intellectuals escape the *Conducător's* notice. His brand of Communism had its own particular vision of what the most appropriate tasks for writers were, as the 1972 Party conference made explicit:

"The creative activity of the cohabiting minorities in their native tongues in science, art and literature has to be stimulated in close unison with the development of the creations of the Romanian people, present socio-political life and the Socialist advance of the country. Literature and art, regardless of what language it sees the light of day in, must reflect the new reality of our country; it must be conducive to bringing the workers, without distinction based on nationality, closer together

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<sup>1148</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp15-16. Typewriters for private use were also strictly rationed (*Kolar*, p312).

fraternally and promote the intellectual development of the entire people in the struggle to build Socialism and Communism".<sup>1149</sup>

In a similar vein, Edgár Balogh discussed the obligations of the publicist:

"The scope of political journalism has expanded under Socialism, its range of subjects proliferated and it covers every area of political, economic and socio-cultural life. Since, however, the Socialist state system multi-faceted perfection serves the public affairs of the working masses, its role has been taken over to an ever increasing extent by the documents drafted by the joint bodies, the Party decisions, legislation, the literature of central provisions, in writing therefore, which has a million roots and affects millions. During my lessons on political journalism we have after all also analysed and interpreted such party documents, excellent political speeches, broken them down into principles of law and practical duties, referring to the fact that the members of the press have to see to it that they are applied, that they are enforced at local level and that they are explained to the masses and thus the most part of political journalism today is taken up with instruction and popularisation".<sup>1150</sup>

More aggressive assimilatory policies towards the minority followed in the wake of the 11th Romanian Communist Party Congress held between 24th and 27th November 1974. Point seven of its agenda was dedicated to "The nationality issue in Socialism". It confidently predicted the ultimate triumph of the functional principle of classification espoused by Communism:

"...the unity of workers without distinction of nationality will ascend to a higher stage; the workers, without distinction of nationality, will integrate more and more into the process of building multilaterally developed Socialist society and Communism, into the uniform working people of Communist society. At the same time in the prospects of this future certain individual features will continue to persist, primarily between the different categories of workers in production, differences, which depend on their role

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<sup>1149</sup> *A Román Kommunista Párt dokumentai. A román nép és az együttlakó nemzetiségek testvérisége.* Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bucharest, 1973, pp21-22. For Ceaușescu's interference in setting research agendas in history and science, see Kolar, pp297-8 and 302-3.

<sup>1150</sup> Edgár Balogh: *A közírás történetéből.* In: Koppándi, *op. cit.*, pp442-443.

in social activity, but all of these will only stress the democratic character of the new social order, the dialectic unity of the working people".<sup>1151</sup>

Contacts with Hungary (and exposure to the mother tongue in conversation) were hampered by the implementation of decree 225 of 1974 banning natural persons domiciled in Romania from providing accommodation for foreign nationals visiting Romania as tourists or for other purposes with the exception of immediate family. The penalty for breaking the law was a fine of between five and 15 thousand *lej*.<sup>1152</sup> Two years later this was modified to exempt individuals of Romanian origin and those who had settled abroad, were no longer in possession of a Romanian passport, but who had not renounced their Romanian citizenship<sup>1153</sup> betraying its true intent. Moreover Romanian citizens were only permitted to telephone abroad only four times a year, only a fraction of parcels sent between the two countries actually arrived and letters addressed in Hungarian were often not forwarded. The import of Hungarian-language records, books, films and so on was prohibited and private travel to Hungary so restricted as to be virtually impossible.<sup>1154</sup>

The 1976-77 school year brought further changes to the education system with the four grades normally taught at lycées split, so that ninth and tenth grade were attached to primary schools. Proceeding to the final two grades was made dependent on passing an entrance examination. In many places, no opportunities for completing them in Hungarian existed, facing youngsters with the choice of transferring to Romanian classes (not a viable option for everyone) or learning a trade, thereby barring the path of many to higher education. In 1978-79 a mere three per cent of all pupils in the eleventh and twelfth grades were Hungarian.<sup>1155</sup> To make matters worse, although the 1956 decree allowing university entrance examinations to be taken in minority languages had not been repealed, its validity was undermined, making it clear that only candidates who had gone through the education system in

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<sup>1151</sup> *A Román Kommunista Párt Programja a Sokoldalúan Fejlett Szocialista Társadalom Megteremtése és Románia Előrehaladása a Kommunizmus Felé.* A Román Kommunista Párt 11. kongresszusa. 1974. november 24-27. Quoted in *Medvetánc*, pp144-145.

<sup>1152</sup> For the full text see *Medvetánc*, pp134-136.

<sup>1153</sup> For the full text, see *op. cit.*, p136.

<sup>1154</sup> *Hetven év*, p111 and *Vincze II*, p26.

<sup>1155</sup> *Hetven év*, p85 and *Vincze II*, p22.

Romanian stood a chance of success. However, even this was no cast-iron guarantee since a *numerus clausus* was applied in some fields of study and *numerus nullus* in others. Consequently in the 1977-78 academic year only 7497 of the 180,000 students in higher education were Hungarian.<sup>1156</sup>

Another means of watering down Hungarian identity was the policy enshrined in a decree from May 30th 1975 on placements, dispersing fresh graduates across the country, usually far from their towns of origin in Romanian-speaking districts where they were cut off from their native tongue environment with no facilities for their children to attend Hungarian-language schools. It was compulsory for them to work at the designated place of employment for three to five years depending on the profession exercised. Given that the penalty for refusing was to pay back the money spent on acquiring a degree and the loss of the qualification they had little alternative to obeying.<sup>1157</sup>

This practice became so widespread, particularly for graduates of the Medical and Pharmaceutical Institute in *Marosvásárhely/Tîrgu Mureş* that Lajos Takács, András Sütő and János Fazekas sent a memorandum on the subject to Ceauşescu in 1978 and mild protests were voiced in the plenary of the National Council the same year. Ceauşescu attempted to allay their fears: "In general efforts must be made to direct graduates - particularly teaching staff, but also those destined for the health care sector and agriculture - to their birthplace and not send them to the other end of the county or even the country".<sup>1158</sup>

At the 1978 National Council, Pál Bodor, then the Editor in Chief of Romanian Radio and Television spoke sincerely about the phraseology deployed in conjunction with the Hungarians:

"To be perfectly honest, I do not feel that the formulation 'irrespective of nationality' is entirely appropriate [...]. A Communist cannot refrain from taking account of someone's nationality. The peculiar psychology of the nationality, a certain past, a good few customs and memories constitute a context. We quite rightly abandoned the concept of minority a number of years ago already. But putting it in the language of

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<sup>1156</sup> *Hetven év*, p86 and *Vincze II*, p22.

<sup>1157</sup> *Hetven év*, p60 and *Vincze II*, p23.

<sup>1158</sup> *România Szocialista Köztársaság Magyar és Német Nemzetiségű Dolgozói Tanácsainak Pléniumai 1978 március 13-14.* Bukarest, 1978. Politikai Könyvkiadó, p19. Quoted in: *Vincze II*, p23.

figures the Hungarian nationality has been a national minority for 60 years.

Numerous sensitivities arise from it [...] today's inferiority complexes, which will not vanish without trace overnight, are matters we have to be very familiar with and we must take account of them in the course of our political, educational and cultural work".<sup>1159</sup>

Ceaușescu's reply kept minority identity firmly subsumed within the greater project of realising a true Communist identity:

"We are creating a new, revolutionary humanism, which places the person and the multilateral development of individuality before anything else, but we do not encourage individualism, instead increasing the individual's responsibility towards the community, society. Our starting premise is that it is possible to achieve and enforce the material and intellectual prosperity and freedom of the individual only within the framework of the general prosperity, freedom and independence of the people as a whole.

The national question and the problems linked to guaranteeing complete equality for the workers of Hungarian, German and other nationalities has to be made sense of within this context. Only within the framework of the community, the general development of the homeland and the raising of the degree of civilisation of the country can better conditions for the success of the nationalities be guaranteed. Any other way of approaching the problem can only give rise to incomprehension and upset and can only impede collaboration in the unbroken implementation of our homeland's multilateral development programme".<sup>1160</sup>

Representations of the Hungarian minority destined for the Hungarian readership consisted of little more than an obedient rehash of the official Party tenets, as illustrated by Sándor Koppándi's contribution to a collection of essays from 1981 by Hungarian and Romanian authors.

Koppándi begins by focusing on the inherent ambiguity of minorities, how they could be a positive or negative factor in the life of a state:

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<sup>1159</sup> *România Szocialista Köztársaság Magyar és Német Nemzetiségű Dolgozói Tanácsainak Plénumai. 1978. március 13-14.* Bukarest, 1978. Politikai Könyvkiadó. Quoted (without page reference) in *Medvetánc*, p149.

<sup>1160</sup> *Op. cit.*. Quoted in *Medvetánc*, pp149-150.

"It is part of historical experience that the presence of nationalities can serve the interests of bringing peoples closer together and developing friendly cooperation under favourable conditions, whilst it can be the source of permanent rivalry and antagonism otherwise. Given that the nature of relations between nations and nationalities is historically determined it is self-evident that they cannot be judged exclusively on the basis of abstract general principles.

The stance adopted by the Romanian Communist Party takes as its point of departure the historical reality that in the centuries preceding the emergence of the homogenous nation state Hungarians, Germans and smaller numbers of people of other nationalities settled down alongside the Romanians".<sup>1161</sup>

Koppándi then quotes directly from Ceauşescu to lend greater authority to his argument:

"Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu indicated in his speech at the congress on political education and socialist culture on 2nd June 1976 that:

'As I already remarked, as time went by through the centuries and millennia peoples developed, settled down, became nations and independent states. This is an objective historical reality and nobody can alter it regardless of whether certain historians like it or not. The problem cannot be couched in terms whereby peoples are judged depending on the juncture at which they settled in a given territory and it cannot be couched in terms of distinctions being drawn between them as regards the rights they enjoy on this basis, but setting out from historical reality, which nobody can modify, a policy of complete equality and mutual esteem between peoples, nations and nationalities has to be consistently applied, every national entity has to be respected, assuring their harmonious cooperation, fraternity and solidarity in the common battle for the cause of social and national freedom and justice and of the peaceful cohabitation and cooperation of all nations'.

[...]

The solution to the national issue is primarily a political question and as such dependent on the character and essence of the politics that prevail. As is the case in social relations in general, political directives and standards also have a role in defining the establishment and evolution of national relations. In our country, the

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<sup>1161</sup> Sándor Koppándi and László Lőrincz: *A nemzetiségi kérdés megoldása*. In: *A Romániai magyar nemzetiség*, edited by Sándor Koppándi, Bukarest, Kriterion, 1981, p7.

policy of the Romanian Communist Party, which is the expression of the common social interest, is simultaneously state policy. The source of its standards and directives is the Party Programme, its rules and the decisions and instructions of its leading bodies. These determine the formation and development of social and political relations - including national relations. Just as solving all problems linked to economic and social development in our country is the inalienable right and duty of the Communist Party and Romanian state it follows that the formulation of nationalities policy also falls within the sovereign jurisdiction of the Party and the state".<sup>1162</sup>

As was acknowledged in the Programme adopted at the 11th congress, close bonds of cooperation had been born of centuries of living and working side by side often under difficult circumstances, which in turn laid the foundations for present day unity. The qualitatively superior policy pursued by the Party eclipsed all that had gone before as it had permanently eradicated oppression and inequality. In building a socialist society the Party had taken full account of Romania's historical, social and national realities, adapting the general principles to suit the country's specific needs.<sup>1163</sup>

The Hungarians were the largest nationality, numbering 1,705,810 or 7.91 per cent of the overall population at the most recent census [1977], 98 per cent of whom lived in Transylvania.<sup>1164</sup> From this information the authors conclude that:

"...Romania is a homogenous nation state in which citizens of other nationalities live alongside the Romanians who constitute the overwhelming majority. Therefore we cannot speak of a multinational state in the case of our country.

As a general rule when designating the aggregate of specific characteristics defining the various ethnic groups living and working together with the Romanian people we employ the expression "cohabiting nationality". This is not a purely formalistic disavowal of the concept of "national minority", but at the same time encompasses the efforts aimed at signalling qualitative differences. In the past - both before and after the First World War - what was meant by national minority was any group in a politically, economically or socially disadvantageous situation compared with the citizens forming the majority. At home, the solution to the national issue took place

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<sup>1162</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op.cit.*, pp7-8.

<sup>1163</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, pp9-10.

<sup>1164</sup> For a detailed breakdown by county, see *idem*, p10.

as an integral part of the process of radical social, political and economic transformations, which means that the complete legal equality of all citizens irrespective of nationality is democratically and consistently guaranteed as one of the substantial components of Party and state policy. Both the Romanian workers and the members of the cohabiting nationalities benefit identically from this legal equality in every area of economic, political, social and cultural life regardless of the size of the ethnic group concerned".<sup>1165</sup>

The more democratic the state, the more comprehensively it will act in the shared interests of all its inhabitants regardless of nationality (the implication being that the Socialist state, as the most enlightened and advanced expression of democracy devised by mankind, will outstrip all others and hence the position of minorities in them is the envy of the rest of the world). The Romanian experience testified to this: "The complete integration of the nationalities into society is achieved by their participation in the production of material and intellectual assets in all areas of social and economic life through their labour. This integration does not involve the renunciation of their unique characteristics; on the contrary, it creates enhanced opportunities for them to be asserted. In the process of resolving the national issue the determining role played by the social factor does not assume a nature, which is directed against the unique features of the nationality as expressed in language, culture, traditions, consciousness and so on. Legal equality is uniform and indivisible: it cannot be assured for the nation and the nationalities separately. Recognition of the specific issue of the nationalities is not the result of cyclical calculations or concessions, but of realpolitik democratic in spirit and grounded in reality in the same way as the solution to the national issue is not a matter of narrow nationality interests, an instrument of self-defence or a compromise, but is naturally a matter of national-nationality interest and the general democratic interest at one and the same time".<sup>1166</sup>

The solution was a socialist one, which meant that in the course of "the deliberate stimulation of social homogenisation" relations between the nation and nationalities had become socialist, but this did not mean that vigilance could be relaxed or that the solution was permanently valid as "amalgamation" would continue to be an ongoing

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<sup>1165</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, pp10-11.

<sup>1166</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, p12.



process bound up with economic and social advance and the creation of a new model of civilisation, in short the undertakings of common interest to all workers.<sup>1167</sup> Indeed one of the main causes of inequality had been the uneven distribution of economic resources. Major investments had been made in Transylvania with its 16 counties receiving over 28 per cent of the money earmarked for developing the national economy between 1965 and 1979. Putting industrial infrastructure in place was the most effective means of improving living conditions and the degree of civilisation and thereby a fundamental precondition of equality.<sup>1168</sup> Road construction projects had made Transylvania more accessible to modern traffic and the 513,926 new homes built during the same 1965-1979 period had visibly shifted the population balance between town and village. In the two counties with the densest concentration of Hungarians, *Hargita/Harghita* and *Kovácsna/Covasna* the urban population has swollen from 10 per cent to 43.7 and from 12 per cent to 50.7 respectively between 1948 and 1979. There were now 40 towns in Transylvania with over 20,000 inhabitants, of which seven boasted a population of over 100,000.<sup>1169</sup> Furthermore, Hungarians were well represented in the Grand National Assembly (7.8 per cent), in the Central Council of Trade Unions (8.6 per cent) and all other significant organisations, including the Writers' Union making up 147 out of its 1296 members.<sup>1170</sup> Not only was Hungarian-language education amply provided for in sections and/or teaching units in 1079 nursery schools, 1276 primary schools, 120 lycées and four technical schools, but almost 70,000 workers of Hungarian nationality had taken part in 4310 theatre and dance groups and choirs in the Song of Romania Festival. Of the 8505 titles published in over 163 million copies in 1976-1977 alone, 1063 were in one of the minority languages.<sup>1171</sup> The conciliatory message of equality and inter-ethnic harmony glossed over the material differences, but their persistence was attested to by the unflagging assimilatory efforts of the regime.

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<sup>1167</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, pp12-13.

<sup>1168</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, p14.

<sup>1169</sup> Koppándi and Lőrincz, *op. cit.*, p15.

<sup>1170</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp16-17.

<sup>1171</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp24 and 26.

### 3.5 The Gloves Come Off: Systematic Erosion of Rights in the 1980s

Internationally, Romania's policy towards the Hungarians had taken flak since the CSCE had begun monitoring events in Transylvania and memoranda and letters from prominent Party figures had been leaked to the outside world.<sup>1172</sup> Political opposition to Ceaușescu amongst the Hungarians surfaced in underground publications such as *Counterpoints (Ellenpontok)* in Nagyvárad/Oradea. In September of 1982, its editors (the writer Attila Ara-Kovács, the poet Géza Szőcs, the actor Attila Kertész, teacher Károly Tóth amongst others) managed to forward a memorandum to participants at the Madrid Conference of the Helsinki Council, which gave an accurate assessment of the reality:

"The natural development of our identity is being obstructed by every possible means. One generation of Hungarians after another is growing up in an atmosphere, in which our values are being disparaged, of chauvinism propagating the superiority of Romanian history and culture, without being given an opportunity to become familiar with the real history of Transylvania or its own ethnic community. The state treats us, first and foremost the intelligentsia and workers, like hidden enemies. The security services carry out acts of terror. If we raise our voices in defence of our culture we are branded as chauvinists. In practice we live in Romania as second-class citizens and our opportunities for professional advancement are restricted by the fact that we are Hungarian".<sup>1173</sup>

After the arrest of authors and their departure from Romania, the baton was passed to the illegal *Transylvanian Hungarian News Agency (Erdélyi Magyar Hírlap)*.<sup>1174</sup>

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<sup>1172</sup> The most notable being by György Lázár, Lajos Takács and Károly Király as published in the influential volume *Witnesses to Cultural Genocide, First-Hand Reports on Romania's Minority Policies Today*. Published by the American Transylvanian Federation and the Committee for Human Rights in Romania, New York, 1979.

<sup>1173</sup> *Memorandum a helsinki értekezlet megállapodásainak betartását ellenőrző madridi konferencia résztvevőihöz. Irodalmi Újság*, 1983, 1. Quoted (without page reference) in László Balogh, pp337-338.

<sup>1174</sup> *Hetven év*, p74.

In his 1983 speech to the National Council plenary, Ceaușescu was anxious to reiterate that the nationality problem had been solved (thereby denying the minority any entitlement to a distinct identity or culture whatsoever) and that none of the country's sons were more equal than any other. This had been brought about in three ways. Firstly, everyone enjoyed the right to work and to equal pay for work of equal value in harmony with the principles of Socialist dignity. These rights were not simply proclaimed in the Constitution, but had been realised in everyday life with the even distribution of the forces of production throughout the country. Secondly, the right to free education and opportunities for the cohabiting nationalities to learn in their own languages, to familiarise themselves with the latest scientific accomplishments and learn the language of revolution. Thirdly, intensive cultural, artistic and other activities were in progress to shape the Socialist consciousness of the people, who were purposefully creating their own history, their free, worthy and independent Communist future. The requisite budget had been allocated for supporting this artistic and cultural work in the languages of the nationalities, as testified by the literature, press, theatres, radio and television broadcasts and the large number of flourishing amateur ensembles.<sup>1175</sup>

The democratic solution to the problem was irrefutable proof of Socialism's superiority, which had triumphed in putting human relationships on a new footing based on friendship, fraternity and equality:

"We would like [...] the nationalities in other countries to enjoy as many rights as the Romanian ones. We do everything in our power to ensure that we at all times develop and guarantee the best conditions for making equality effective, for allowing every son of the homeland to take part in the entirety of the work, in the creation of worthy, free life, in the strengthening of Romania's sovereignty and independence!".<sup>1176</sup>

He then ridiculed those who had the temerity to grumble about the adverse effects of industrialisation:

"Ever since we began vigorously developing industry, people have started saying that there is a danger of denationalisation, that it was better when you sat at home in the

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<sup>1175</sup> Nicolae Ceaușescu: *Beszéd a Magyar és a Német Nemzetiségű Dolgozók Tanácsainak Együttes Ülésén*. In: *Románia Szocialista Köztársaság Magyar és Német Nemzetiségű Dolgozói Tanácsainak Pléniumai*. 1983. március 30-31. Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, 1983, pp9-10.

<sup>1176</sup> Ceaușescu, *op. cit.*, p15.

village, cut off from the world, not knowing about anything than it is now when you go into the factory, the educational or research institute, enter a new environment, acquire new knowledge. They say that it was better once upon a time than it is now when new horizons come into view in the world and in life for each and every citizen, when new friendships, new relationships are being established, when people are beginning to understand better and more directly that they only have one enemy: the exploiters, the imperialists and the reactionaries. That every worker is their friend, irrespective of nationality and that he has to work and collaborate with them in complete unity.

It is really true that there are some people, although they are few in number, who believe that another danger looms large: that Romanian girls are marrying Hungarian lads and vice versa, that Hungarian girls are marrying Romanian lads [...]. This has happened in the past as well - as a matter of fact for centuries, ever since Romanians, Hungarians, Germans and Serbs have been living side by side in this region, young people have married within the same nationality, but there have also been marriages between the various nationalities, but where is the bad in that? Does such a marriage damage a nationality or infringe its rights? In the worst possible case they will produce healthier, more beautiful and more intelligent children, which will be good for our people".<sup>1177</sup>

Behind these remarks lay the romanianization of Transylvanian towns accelerated by the industrialisation programme. On the one hand there was a large-scale influx of Romanians from the surrounding villages as a natural concomitant of urbanisation and on the other a centrally controlled "population redistribution" policy was put into effect. In practice Romanian citizens were not permitted to choose their place of residence and employment freely and it became virtually impossible for Hungarians in rural areas to move into the nearby cities. At the same time workers from Wallachia and Moldova were brought into the Transylvanian towns and industrial centres en masse. Romanian white-collar workers who were willing to move into primarily Hungarian areas were entitled to a settlement allowance of between 15 and 30,000 lei. All of this was clearly designed to wear down Hungarian identity by means of what I

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<sup>1177</sup> Ceaușescu, *op. cit.*, pp21-22.

would call "ethnic dilution",<sup>1178</sup> exacerbated further by the drain caused by emigration. According to official Hungarian statistics, 197,000 Hungarians left Romania for Hungary between 1918 and 1924 and 169,000 between 1924 and 1940.<sup>1179</sup> In 1985 1709 applications for permanent residence permits were lodged with the Hungarian authorities from Romania. In 1986 the number had increased to 3284 and in 1987 it was 6499. From mid-1985, the (Transylvanian) Hungarians seized the opportunity to escape to the West via Hungary. Once the Austrian border had been closed they were allowed to stay in Hungary if their passports had expired. On the surface the Romanian authorities did not approve the emigration yet they began issuing passports en masse even to intellectuals who had previously been prohibited from travel on many occasions.<sup>1180</sup>

At the end of 1984 an anything but innocuous change in terminology came into circulation with Hungarianness demoted lower than ever in the phrase "Romanian workers of Hungarian nationality".<sup>1181</sup> The 13th Congress of the Romanian Communist Party held between 19th and 22nd November concluded in its report: "In our country we have solved the national problem once and for all on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist outlook and the principles of scientific Socialism and we have guaranteed complete equality for all citizens of the homeland. Regardless of nationality, the language that they speak each one of them is the son of the same homeland, we are all citizens of the Romanian Socialist Republic".<sup>1182</sup> In January of 1985 cessation of radio broadcasts in the provinces was ordered, putting an end to the seven hours a day of Hungarian-language programming in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* and *Marosvásárhely/Tirgu Mures*. The same fate befell television output, which had increased from an initial half hour a week to 300 minutes

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<sup>1178</sup> Süle, *op cit.*, pp255-256 and Vincze II, pp24-25. See also: András A. Gergely: *Nemzetiség és Urbanizáció Romániában. A magyar kisebbség és a városfejlesztés, a Korunk harminc évfolyama tükreben*. Héttorony Könyvkiadó, Tatabánya, 1988.

<sup>1179</sup> Medvetánc, p111. Cf. also *Borderland*, p32.

<sup>1180</sup> Medvetánc, p113.

<sup>1181</sup> Vincze II, p30.

<sup>1182</sup> *A Román Kommunista Párt Központi Bizottságának Jelentése. A Román Kommunista Párt 13. kongresszusa. 1984. november 19-22.* Quoted (without page reference) in Medvetánc, p150.

with documentaries and portraits cataloguing Hungarian life.<sup>1183</sup> Within a radius of 30 to 100 kilometres from the Hungarian border where reception conditions were unfavourable for receiving Hungarian (*anyaországi*) transmissions, the authorities imposed fines and dismantled antennae rather than allow information to seep across.<sup>1184</sup>

As if these measures were not enough, Ceaușescu also planned the complete physical eradication of all visible Hungarian monuments from the Romanian landscape. This total denial of a historical Hungarian presence was preceded by its symbolic equivalent in April of 1988 as of when place names could only be referred to in their Romanian form in the Hungarian press and in literary works.<sup>1185</sup> Had the "systemisation" or resettlement programme gone ahead some 8000 mainly Hungarian and German villages would have been razed to the ground and their uprooted inhabitants scattered in predominantly Romanian areas.<sup>1186</sup>

The threat alone was so great that it sparked off a mass protest rally in Budapest on 27th June 1988.

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<sup>1183</sup> *Hetven év*, pp99-100.

<sup>1184</sup> *Hetven év*, p100.

<sup>1185</sup> *Hetven év*, p99; *Vincze II*, p30 and Dinu Giurescu, *The Razing of Romania's Past*, The Bath Press, London, 1990.

<sup>1186</sup> *Hetven év*, p60, *Vincze II*, p30 and Hoensch, *op. cit.*, pp286-7.

### 3.6 History as a Battle Ground: The Heyday of Daco-Romanian Continuity<sup>1187</sup>.

One of the most perceptive summaries of the agonising dilemma faced by producers of culture in Ceaușescu's Romania originates from the pen of a Hungarian historian who could not have foreseen the impact of the Communist experiment at controlling the contents of knowledge:

"...the idea of continuity took up position at the centre of the entire Romanian conception of history, during the last two centuries it cast its spell on the historians and thinkers originating from the Romanian people and this brought into being the intellectual formation which we call today Romanian nationalism. We can assert with confidence therefore that the Daco-Roman (more correctly Dacian Roman-Romanian) doctrine belongs to the ranks of the world's most productive fictions. No matter how fertile it has proven in the past it nevertheless remains a fiction and this fact lends Romanian historical contemplation a certain fateful quality. Today's entire Romanian national consciousness<sup>1188</sup> is built on it intellectually. Consequently the Romanian historian is faced with a grave dilemma from the very outset. He either lets himself be swept off his feet by his national sentiment and remains blind to the truth or he can see the historical truth and comes into conflict with national public opinion. In the first scenario popularity and laurels are his reward, in the second disparagement and persecution. In the light of that knowledge it is easy to comprehend that scarcely any Romanian historian is willing to play that role in the face of youthful and in its bias impatient national public opinion. But they cannot assume this role for another

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<sup>1187</sup> According to István Kocsis, Daco-Romanian continuity and Daco-Romanianism are two easily confused kindred doctrines. Daco-Romanianism, a racial theory positing innate Romanian superiority over all other nations in the Carpathian Basin, employs Daco-Romanian continuity as its legitimating ideology. What is of immediate concern to us is the function fulfilled by both. See István Kocsis: *A meztelen igazságért. A Magyar-Román Viszony Megromlásának Története*, Püski Kiadó, Budapest, 1996. On the dispute between Hungary and Romania over history, see *Borderland*, pp25-48. By far the best study of mythical elements in Romanian history and the way it was rewritten and reinterpreted under Communism is Lucian Boia's *History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness*, Central European University press, Budapest, 2001 (henceforth *Boia*). He deals with Daco-Romanian continuity on pp85-106 and with uninterrupted geographical settlement on pp113-128. On the parameters of the production of history under Ceaușescu, see *Verdery*, pp218-224 and 248-255 and on its politicisation see also *Kolar*, p18.

<sup>1188</sup> Although the original is *nemzetiség* the meaning is not that of nationality.

reason anyway since the load bearing columns of contemporary nationalism would come crashing down in front of their very eyes, plunging the entire nation into intellectual pandemonium and strife.

Romanian nationalism therefore strews virtually insurmountable moral barriers in the path of Romanian historical scholarship in its investigations, which ultimately derive from the fictitious nature of the Roman-Romanian continuity theorem and render it virtually impossible for Romanian historians to bring to the light of day certain parts of Romanian historical reality. The ambition to uncover reality in historical enquiry has not ceased to exist elsewhere, however, and the Romanians have thereby ended up in the peculiar situation of frequently being less able to examine the question of their origin objectively than foreign peoples. The seriousness of this situation inevitably inspires Romanian historical scholarship to plough disproportionately large amounts of energy into rescuing the fiction of Roman-Romanian continuity. This is the explanation behind the explosion in Romanian historical propaganda literature aimed at salvaging the unsalvageable. At the same time, however, the historians of other peoples who are at an advantage in terms of their ability to pass objective judgements are slowly unearthing the Romanian national body from beneath the layers of topsoil and presenting it to the world's public opinion in a form, which more closely corresponds to reality. It is clear that sooner or later the viewpoint of scientific criticism will gain the upper hand and the stance of Dacian Roman-Romanian continuity will gradually be discredited in the eyes of its well-meaning supporters".<sup>1189</sup>

The resurgence in popularity of the Daco-Romanian continuity genre within Romanian historiography was an offshoot of Ceauşescu's recourse to the nationalist principle of classification as a source of legitimisation, offering his regime a solution to the problem of "weak state control".<sup>1190</sup> In Verdery's view:

"...the Party was *forced* onto the terrain of national values (not unwillingly) under pressure from others, especially intellectuals, whom it could fully engage in no other manner. These intellectuals were drawing upon personal concerns and traditions of

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<sup>1189</sup> Zoltán I. Tóth: *Erdély Román Nacionalizmus*. In: *Magyarok és Románok*. Volume II. Edited by József Deér and László Gáldi. Athenaeum Irodalmi és Nyomdai Rt., Budapest, 1944, pp75-76.

<sup>1190</sup> Verdery, *op. cit.*, p85.



inquiry that made the Nation a continuing and urgent reality for them despite its official interdiction. They were also engaged in conflicts amongst themselves for which, as before, the Nation provided a basic idiom. To use a different phrasing, Romanian intellectuals were utilizing something - the Nation - that we might call a master symbol, one having the capacity to dominate the field of symbols and discourses in which it was employed, pressing the meanings of other terms and symbols in its own direction. In addition, I see the national ideology as having an elective affinity, beyond any leadership's conscious manipulation, with certain inherent characteristics of Romanian socialism".<sup>1191</sup>

The Daco-Romanian representation of the origin of the Romanians enjoyed the privileged status of mainstream orthodoxy in Ceaușescu's Romania and articles and books written by its advocates were translated into Hungarian, a prime example being Ștefan Pascu's *What is Transylvania? (Ce este Transilvania?)* appearing in a *Kriterion* edition in 1984.

The function of the theory of Daco-Romanian continuity in relation to the Hungarians and Transylvania was twofold: firstly, it posited the absolute supremacy of the Romanians over the Hungarians based on their distant origins as a noble, cultured, agrarian people thereby installing them as the undisputed lords of their own homeland and secondly by refuting the Hungarian version of Transylvanian history, it places the Romanian claim to the territory beyond all doubt. Oblique reminders to the Hungarians that they were relative newcomers, the offspring of interlopers were also reminders of their inferior social status, that their continued presence in Transylvania was the result of Romanian tolerance and kind-heartedness rather than a preordained right. This in turn had ramifications for policy towards them, as it could be used to justify anything from an accelerated drive for absorption into the superior Romanian people to expulsion on the grounds that the Hungarians were a destabilising factor, guilty of irredentism until proven innocent. As with all the direct or indirect representations of the Hungarians the foundation of the contents in objective reality is of little import. The Daco-Romanian doctrine may or may not be backed by archaeological remains, but wrangling over the evidence is not relevant to our discussion except as an indication that the imposed definition was being contested.

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<sup>1191</sup> Verdery, *op. cit.*, p122. Emphasis in original.

### 3.7 History in the Vitriolic Mode: Ion Lăncrăjan

One example of such a text intended for mass consumption with a print run of over 50,000 copies is *Cuvînt despre Transilvania* by Ion Lăncrăjan<sup>1192</sup> provoked a response across the border in Hungary with its offensively anti-Hungarian passages. Tacitly endorsed by the regime by virtue of having been printed in the first place, it puts forward a vision of Romanian Transylvanian identity interwoven with a consideration of Hungarian identity primarily geared to a Romanian audience. Its idealised version of Transylvania is an uncanny mirror image of Transylvanianist sentiments (confirming that collective identity is indeed a social construct drawing on a number of stock elements): Transylvania had been the Muse of great poets from the Romanian pantheon, its soil had been transformed into holy ground because their feet had trodden there and it had been the birthplace of precursor revolutionaries such as Horea, plucked from obscurity to veneration.<sup>1193</sup> The author embarks on a fanfare to the common man, an ode to the unknown Romanian, the salt of the earth before contrasting him with the vile oppressors, the Hungarians:

"I must nevertheless pause to consider one of our great ancestors, primarily because he was present at the most important historical events and directly or indirectly causing them to unfold or accelerating the process. He was the one who rose in revolt

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<sup>1192</sup> The title has religious overtones; hence *Sermon on Transylvania* would be an accurate rendition. The Hungarian translation balks at this, preferring *Oration on Transylvania*. My translation is based on the Hungarian edition: *Szónoklat Erdélyről* translated by Levente G. Borbely, Áramlat Kiadó, Budapest, 1990. The original work was published in 1982 and divided into four parts with a collection of articles written between the 1950s and the 1980s. Henceforward: *Lăncrăjan*. On Lăncrăjan, see also Kolar, p366.

<sup>1193</sup> Lăncrăjan, *op. cit.*, pp8-9. Horea was one of three leaders of an uprising in 1784. Peasants recruited into Romanian and Székely regiments intended to fortify the Eastern frontier against the Ottomans were given plots of land and exempted from feudal obligations. An imperial decree allowing the *Martontelke/Motiș* miners to serve in the border guards was misunderstood as applying to all peasants. When the authorities attempted to arrest Crișan, heading one of the groups converging on *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* to join the regiments, all hell broke loose. Within six days 230 manor houses had been burned and the rebels tried to take *Déva/Deva*. Joseph II resorted to force to restore order, suppressing the revolt in December. Horea and Cloșca were condemned to death and put to the wheel, whilst Crișan committed suicide (Castellan, pp110-1). See also *Oțetea*, pp277-280 and *Prodan*, pp250-271. On Horea's meteoric rise in Party-inspired historiography, see *Verdery*, pp215-255.

when he could not longer endure, for the most part he worked indefatigably, very often he died in other people's wars and rose again for all eternity through the legends and folk tales, through the songs of pain and lament, which are sung in his memory from the days of their childhood onwards by his descendants condemned to the same fate. I do not know what this ancestor was called. He was proud, yet modest, majestic, yet simple, kind, yet implacable, coarse, yet sensitive with it, wholeheartedly devoted to his work yet ready to burst into song or to dance, brave, yet demure. I do not know what his name was, whether it was Ion or Gheorghe, Nicolae or Simion, Patru or Vasile, Todor or Nicodim, Visalom or Mihai, Traian or Romus, Pavel or Aurel, Iosif or Avram, Axente or Zevediu, Ștefan or Clement, Zanovie or Jilu, but what I do know is that he was a peasant and that he made a major contribution to the birth of a people, the creation of a new language, which he conjugated over many hundreds of years and enriched in a myriad of ways. (...) His customs, his entire bearing are the proofs of ancient lineage and genuine nobility, an irrefutable argument in favour of kinship with the land, from which he took so much and to which he nevertheless gave as much in return, leaving his mark on it without the merest hint of duress as he did with the Homeland [...] he shared his own crusts of bread and thereby very often ended up empty-handed. It was not because of his boundless kindness, which in itself is proof enough of ancient origin and strength in past and present alike, but because of the voraciousness of those to whom he extended a hand of brotherhood and who on more than one occasion robbed him, who very often crucified him, shot him down, broke him on the wheel, tore him to pieces so that he would never be able to recover, so that he would never again be in possession of the will or entertain the thought of obstructing those who wished to be the absolute rulers of these legendary lands. For a while after every series of reprisals, after every wave of violence flaying the people it seemed as if there were no sign of resistance and that the reign of repression sweeping over the land was total and final. Then, however, when nobody could have suspected it, he - His Majesty the Peasant, the rightful and actual voivod of Transylvania, the uncrowned king of the entire Homeland - once again made his presence felt in his own way, whilst of course choosing the most appropriate juncture. First he turned to the land, then so that it would not lie fallow, he gave it the seed it desired, caressing the grass in mind so that it would grow all the faster, looking with joy at the ewe and cow, which grazed upon it, as if he had eaten it himself and had his fill [...]. Here in Transylvania everything has that extra ounce of resonance - tears are

heavier and saltier; the soil is better; the mountain is prouder and greyer, the slopes are more lyrical and dreamier; the people are more sedate and resolute than people are in general when they know that they are the brothers of the land on which they walk and which they love".<sup>1194</sup>

Transylvania had never consisted of villages alone, but could exhibit a long list of towns and citadels from Roman and Dacian times:

"...there could not have been any survival, our continuity - which we have quite justifiably spoken out about in the past and continue to do so and which is founded in fact - would have crumbled in the wind. The invasions would have destroyed him if this hearth - the village - had not existed, which lived and lasted through the peasant and it is thanks to the peasant who began anew after every incursion, every wave of vengeance and every misfortune [...]. In the beginning he was Dacian, then Roman and later still Romanian in a natural continuity, which archaeological and philological research will shed light on from an ever-wider variety of perspectives without ever being able to fully chart every facet of the problem. And this is not because this - incontrovertible continuity - is enigmatic or miraculous, but because it is so real and natural, it is so inextricably linked to these places that there is virtually no need for proof; it belongs to the natural circle of fundamental and defining elements, which are the intimate components of an entire people's way of existence".<sup>1195</sup>

These ancient bonds between Transylvania and her Romanian people continued to be topical in the radically different political climate of today:

"But these, I will be informed, are sentimental arguments, simple poetic exaggerations. My reply is that I am more than aware of the circumstances I am speaking in, taking into account that I live and work in a new Socialist home country in which the nationalities enjoy equal rights. And I replied that the brotherhood we have been and are moving towards cannot truly be attained unless they genuinely (in other words not on a purely formal level and not merely as part of a fad) recognise a few extant and important facts: our survival and continuity, the significance of the Romanians of Transylvania permanently being in the majority and the irreversible character of our great Union, as something which naturally belongs to this list of facts [...]. Irredentism, however, no matter how cunning and perfidious it may be, cannot

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<sup>1194</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp9-13.

<sup>1195</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp14-15.

beget anything other than trouble and indignation and will turn the clock back to the old days of discord. This in turn is grist to the mill of imperialism and will be detrimental to the national interests of the Romanians and indeed to the national interests of everyone who lives and works together with them in the same free and proud homeland, which was legitimately called and is still known as Romania, from whose body not a single part or province may be torn without opening up deep and unforgettable wounds, copious and traumatic bleeding such as occurred in 1940, such as occurred on several occasions previous to that and which never has to happen ever again".<sup>1196</sup>

Transylvania was predestined to be the battleground of bitter conflicts, the locus of social and national awakenings:

"A territory where other nations arrived and settled - Hungarians, Germans, Székelys - with whom we Romanians yearned to live in positive and fruitful understanding. Our rage only flared up when they trampled our old rights underfoot, when they made an attempt on our very life, when they wanted us never to have existed, to disappear, to die out for the greater good of others. The target of the settlements was not just Transylvania as a matter of fact, but also the Homeland as a whole, the shattering of a more than self-evident compact unit, inducing a dispersal. The reason behind other peoples being made to settle in certain "points of vital importance" - around *Szeben/Sibiu* and *Beszterce/Bistrița* and in the *Barcaság/Țara Bîrsei* - was that of crushing the main strongholds of the Romanian people, to deprive them of their link with the Carpathians, so that the natural communication between brothers would be cut off".<sup>1197</sup>

The long centuries of being ground down had left an indelible mark on the disposition of the Transylvanians (once again echoing the regionalist reorientation of the Transylvanianists):

"Transylvania was a permanent and inexhaustible centre of energy and in that sense too was a component part of a complete entity, part of the Homeland, with which it was in constant communication, to which it gave everything of its best and in so doing endowing itself with hope and self-confidence, forming and hardening a certain temperament for itself, based on the many hundreds of years of waiting and

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<sup>1196</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, p16.

<sup>1197</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, p17.

struggling. This temperament is more intrepid and steadfast, stormier and harder, difficult and darker, visibly different from that of the Romanians in the other provinces - Oltenia, Dobrudja, Moldova and Bukovina. This is only on the surface, however, because in reality, the reality of two thousand years of existence in these landscapes, the Romanian temperament is one and the same throughout the entire length and breadth of the Homeland as the single language spoken by all Romanians proves. The differences, which have existed and still exist between the Moldovan and Banat, the *Máramaros/Maramureş* and Dobrudjan Romanians, never were and still are not differences of substance, indeed they are different sides of the same likeness, together creating a unique quality, which, without being superior to others, is unmistakably made to persist through the millennia".<sup>1198</sup>

Consequently the contention that the Romanians consist of two groups, one of which is more Western due to its exposure to the Hungarians, the other more Eastern as a consequence of its history is entirely arbitrary, born of the phantasmagoria that the Hungarians had a civilising mission in Transylvania. Indeed, Lăncrănjan is anxious to point out that the Romanians were the more civilised at the time of the Hungarian migration to the Carpathian Basin, since they were Christian, farmers, skilled metalworkers like their Dacian ancestors and retained certain administrative forms from the Roman empire whilst the Hungarians were still living in tents in the mid-twelfth century, true to their nomadic origins.<sup>1199</sup>

Although Socialist Hungary's political system did not in the slightest resemble that of the Horthy era, its leaders still flirted with the daydream of Greater Hungary, labouring under the misapprehension that the collapse of 1918 had been imposed from the outside rather than being the inevitable outcome of internal decay. The Hungarian state had been an artificial construct held together only by suppressing the subject nationalities, whose only crime was to want to speak their own languages and retain their own national way of life, ambitions, which were not directed against the Hungarians themselves, but against the ruling classes, against feudalism and reactionaries who balked at no excesses.<sup>1200</sup> The iniquities of the past could not be laid to rest whilst they were still being raked over by certain quarters camouflaging

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<sup>1198</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp34-5.

<sup>1199</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp35-6.

<sup>1200</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp20-22.

the old complaints with modern terminology. Lăncrănjan categorically rejected the Hungarian founding myth of the *honfoglalás*:

"...so-called historians dug up dead propositions, which had never been proven up to then, something, which indeed could never be proven, namely that Transylvania was a wilderness when the Hungarians came here and that the Romanians only arrived later on. It is impossible to know when, how and whence since there is not the slightest trace of this so-called arrival either in their folklore, their fables, in heaven or on earth. Following in the footsteps of the publicists and the historians [...] trooped the politicians, the representatives of the most reactionary circles who were capable of allying with anyone on the off chance that they might just be able to get back to the privileges they possessed, but had lost, the castles and sprawling estates".<sup>1201</sup>

When they partially succeeded in their schemes (by which Lăncrănjan is referring to the return of Northern Transylvania in the Second Vienna Award),<sup>1202</sup> their atrocities eerily coincided with those contained in anti-Romanian propaganda as they attempted to eradicate the Romanians who as a people had always been too tolerant and indulgent for their own good.<sup>1203</sup>

Transylvania assumed mystical proportions in the author's mind, again echoing the ardent professions of the Hungarian Transylvanians: it was a country in its own right, the hearth of the homeland, a soul from its greater soul, communicating through language, the rustling of the leaves, the legends and beliefs of the people, landscapes that were not merely the meeting point of roads, but of civilisations. The Carpathians had never functioned as a dividing line, a frontier between peoples, but as a pillar and a refuge for the Daco-Romanians then referred to as *vlachs*. Although they did not feature in historical records and no mention was made of their conversion to Christianity this did not mean that continuity was a fiction. The only conclusion that could be drawn was that the Romanians had become Christians at a far earlier stage and more gradually under the influence of the settlers trickling in. The very birth of the Romanian people was interwoven with this occurrence as was the language and mentality. The tradition of labelling the Dacians pagans was misleading as the Dacians were a civilised race who could not be tarred with the same brush as the

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<sup>1201</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp23-24.

<sup>1202</sup> Of 30<sup>th</sup> August 1940.

<sup>1203</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp24-25.

throng of invading barbarians. Had there not been a stable society with a clearly developed mindset of its own then the hills, mountains and rivers, the towns and cities would bear different names. Indeed at one time an attempt was made to abuse administrative jurisdiction to erase all trace of the ancient and glorious Romanian people's presence from history, a futile undertaking, which only served to poison relations between the two peoples. If the Romanians had taken part in the mass migrations so typical of the third to ninth centuries, if they had gone on the rampage with an insatiable appetite for the spoils of conquest or sought a homeland, if they had all become Christians as of a specific date this would have repeatedly occupied a prominent place in the chronicles.<sup>1204</sup> The logical explanation as to why silence surrounds their deeds is that they had taken up permanent residence in the Carpathian Basin long ago where they thrived as shepherds and livestock breeders. The advantage of the mountain ranges was that the plains-loving nomadic tribesmen inundating Europe on horseback from the steppes preferred to give them a wide berth and press on westwards. The mountains and the forests, which clad them, bound the geographically dispersed Romanians together. The voivodships sprang up from the sense of community instilled by these contacts and from the common language and way of thinking and the embryonic states formed by them were taken over and renamed as principalities by the occupiers. Transylvanian Romanians often moved eastwards beyond the Carpathians into the Brother Countries [Moldavia and Wallachia] where entire villages of Transylvanians still dwell.<sup>1205</sup> The scale of such migrations increased after 1867 when the Hungarians became a minority within their own country [the reference being to the Compromise] and, acutely aware of this uncomfortable reality, began systematically eradicating all "alien" elements. Those courageous Romanians who stayed behind suffered as their forbears had over a thousand years of having their land snatched from them and being brutally denationalised, treated like cattle and denied recognition. The righteous anger and

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<sup>1204</sup> Throughout this passage, Lăncrăjan is alluding to Hungarian history and the Hungarian founding myth.

<sup>1205</sup> As the Hungarian translator points out, Lăncrăjan is reiterating the fallacy endorsed by official Romanian historiography that the *csángós* of Moldova are the descendents of Hungarianised Romanian refugees from Transylvania. See for example Dumitru Mărtinaş, *The Origins of the Changos*, The Centre for Romanian Studies, Iaşi and Oxford, 1999. For the view from the Hungarian side, see Ferenc Glatz, *Csángók*, in Bárdi, pp94-5.



spilt blood of the martyrs such as Horea cried to the heavens, causing the counts and rulers to quake with trepidation. Such stirrings of unrest ultimately paved the way for the inevitable unification of 1918.<sup>1206</sup>

Cataloguing the peculiar features, which set Transylvania apart from the rest of Romania without this detracting from the essential unity between the two, Lăncrănjan lists character, conduct, traditional costume, princely bearing, psychology, the concentration of the population in villages and the special, intense and often tragic relationship between the peasant and the land as well as the corpus of literature penned by the cream of Romania's lyrical talent vividly exploring the recesses of the Transylvanian soul with its uncompromising morality and its incredible resilience in the face of adversity. Transylvania's contribution to Romanian culture had been priceless and it had acted like a magnet in attracting the most gifted of writers not just because they wished to demonstrate solidarity towards their less fortunate brothers, but because they saw in it the cradle of Romanian identity, the setting for the original fusion of Dacian and Roman.<sup>1207</sup>

Once Transylvania had finally been united with the Regat, the feeling of relief was overwhelming, the body had been joined with the soul at last and creative energy overflowed.<sup>1208</sup> Any effort to denigrate the event as imperialism had an ulterior motive lurking behind it, since the unification was but the culmination of a natural process, which had already taken place throughout the rest of Europe, that of the setting up of nation states.<sup>1209</sup>

The situation of the Hungarians in Romania could not be deemed identical to that of the Romanians in the Dual Monarchy. The Hungarians, furthermore, had not become a minority in 1918 as they were eager to insist, but at a far earlier stage, sometime around their initial appearance on the scene when they came into contact with the indigenous population with its stable social and political structure with the one weakness that it was not geared to predatory forays or the subjugation and domination of others. A more serious objection against any notion of equivalence, however putative, was the false and provocative conclusion that the Hungarians of Romania

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<sup>1206</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp25-34.

<sup>1207</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp36-45.

<sup>1208</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, p51.

<sup>1209</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp52-53.

were as entitled to agitate for the secession of Transylvania from Romania as the Romanians had been in demanding Transylvanian unification with the Regat. Between the World Wars territorial revision and belligerent revanchism had been officially espoused as Hungarian foreign policy aims and although the lie of the land was somewhat different this did not mean that the old irredentist and revisionist cravings had disappeared without trace, only that their outward form had altered in response to the changed circumstances:

"Hence it often occurs that they [the Hungarians] assiduously speak of unity and fraternity on the one hand whilst on the other they lapse into exaggeration whilst highlighting the Hungarian contribution to the formation of the Transylvanian intellectual legacy, formally recognising continuity whilst drawing attention to the deep roots the Hungarians have struck in Transylvanian soil. The same causes give rise to their evincing demanding behaviour in the cultural sphere, but not exclusively there [...]. In such instances their point of departure is separatist and with premeditation they deliberately ignore the interests and problems of the country as a whole. It is not possible to label these manifestations chauvinist or irredentist, but nor can they be considered fraternal, which is what they purport to be because as I made clear fraternity and unity demand a complete loyalty towards the Homeland where you live and work, towards the concept in other words as Socialism can only be attained if relations between individuals and nations are improved upon and made more humane".<sup>1210</sup>

Transylvania had extended hospitality and given a home to other nations, regardless of whether their intentions had been hostile or not. The newcomers had become established as locals, living side by side with the Romanians, sometimes in equally appalling conditions, which made a nonsense of the "national pride" that might otherwise consoled the Hungarian serf, convincing him that he was superior to his companions in adversity not bred of the same stock as the rulers. Hungarians, Romanians and others had been brothers in misfortune. Beyond the by no means idyllic and harmonious solidarity of the lower classes, it would be absurd to postulate that Romanian and Hungarian capitalists flocked together since the rise of the Romanian bourgeoisie took place later and more falteringly because the Romanians, branded as riff-raff, were long excluded from the towns. Amongst Hungarians,

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<sup>1210</sup> Lăncrăjan, *op. cit.*, pp57-59, the quotation is from p58-59.

regardless of whether they were workers, peasants or capitalists, natural national sentiments degenerated into an unshakeable belief that they were the lords in a country in which the Romanians were put up with, but forced to experience national sentiment in an entirely different manner. At the root of most of the clashes between the indigenous majority and the Hungarians lay this unfair and brutal refusal to concede due recognition.<sup>1211</sup>

The Hungarian minority had been handled with kid gloves:

"The *Gyulafehérvár/Alba Iulia* Union [...] had from the very outset proclaimed equal rights for all the nationalities; the Peace Treaty, which ratified the Union, held out the prospect of special obligations in this respect. To maintain that these rights, obligations and provisions have been implemented one hundred percent would be a major exaggeration in the direction of idealising realities, but to stray too far in the other direction, blackening the realities by claiming that the nationalities had no rights whatsoever at their disposal, that they were subjected to constant persecution is tantamount to wilfully mangling and violating an obvious truth, which is as complex and contradictory as Romanian society itself between 1920 and 1940, but which nevertheless was an indisputable reality. In this era replete with inequalities and inconsistencies, which in general was productive and imparted strength because the collective national energy boiled into one - newspapers were printed in Hungarian and in the languages of the other nationalities in Romania, there were schools since freedom of religion and use of the mother tongue were completely unrestricted. The hardening, which set in, and which naturally also afflicted the Romanian nation in exactly the same way, was related to the oppression and the rise of the Romanian right-wing forces who acted as the zealous accomplices of German Nazism and Italian Fascism. When the Legions assumed power in 1940 matters took an immediate turn

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<sup>1211</sup> Lăncrăjan, *op. cit.*, pp60-62. Here Lăncrăjan resorts to his customary tactic of apparently cutting the Hungarians some slack - in this instance by entertaining the idea that there might have been a degree of solidarity between the two populations - merely to refute his own tentative hypothesis in the next breath. Only the Hungarian serfs, the lowest of the low, may actually have empathised with their Romanian counterparts from whom they were indistinguishable in terms of the miserable conditions in which they eked out a subsistence.

for the worse for the minorities in Romania, but this also held true of the Romanian people".<sup>1212</sup>

The ensuing atrocities, the murders and beatings and the camps affected the deeply anti-fascist Romanians every bit as much as the minorities, the Romanians had never spat on Hungarians for being Hungarians and had not delivered the Jews into the Gestapo's hands. Romanian soldiers fought side by side with their Soviet comrades in liberating Northern Transylvania, thereby erasing the frontier, which had slashed Transylvania's body and soul in two. Against this backdrop, revisionism equalled imperialism, bringing hatred, anger and pain in its wake.<sup>1213</sup>

In the years between 1948 and 1958, the days of the intensification of the class struggle, the old social structure was demolished. This process was far harsher on the Romanians in places where the Party and state bodies were headed by chauvinist or neo-chauvinist Hungarian elements who did not support or indeed directly opposed the establishment of fraternal relations through their work. Although it could be argued that the same applied where Romanians were at the helm, this was only valid in part since the primary concern even in the midst of stepping up the class struggle

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<sup>1212</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp65-66. The Legion of Archangel Michael was the brainchild of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu. Its activist political section became notorious as the Iron Guard. In 1934, Codreanu also founded a political party, Totul Pentru Țară. On the Guard's role in the 1930s and the fascist military dictatorship under Antonescu, see Stephen Fischer-Galați, *The Interwar Period: Greater Romania*, in *Giurescu 1998*, pp293-319.

<sup>1213</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp67-68. The presentation of the statement concerning how the Romanians did not hand their Jewish citizens over to the Nazis is typical of the omissions and misrepresentations Lăncrăjan's work is riddled with. As Pál Köteles remarks in his critique of Lăncrăjan's essay, although it is true that Romania did not deport its Jewish population the Iron Guard implemented its own "final solution" to the "Jewish question" butchering almost half a million in the space of two years without German collaboration, a figure, which does not include those executed in Transylvania. Lăncrăjan also conveniently overlooks the fact that Romania, committing a million troops from 1942 onwards to aid the German effort on the Eastern front, was Hitler's staunchest and most devoted ally in the hope of persuading the Führer to quash the Vienna Award and return Northern Transylvania, not that the Romanian lust for territorial gain ended there, as witnessed by Ribbentrop's note to Mihail Antonescu, the then Foreign Minister concerning a protective buffer stretching to Odessa and Transistria's spell as a Romanian province. Source: Pál Köteles: *Töprengés egy torzkép előtt. Ion Lăncrăjan: Gondolatok Erdélyről*. In: *Tiszatáj*, September 1982, p54. For a comprehensive list of the errors, falsifications and misquotations, see the footnotes in the Hungarian translation of Lăncrăjan, Köteles and Száraz (see below for full bibliographical reference).

was to guarantee the rights of the cohabiting nationalities "which were not even called 'minorities' so as to eradicate even the slightest trace of discrimination [...]. This solicitude naturally dovetailed with the fight then going on against every manifestation of chauvinism. It was nevertheless a little excessive because it sought to give the nationalities preferential treatment over the Romanians. In so doing the ardently hankered after unity and equality was undermined, the necessary and mandatory balance was upset [...]. This led to a state of affairs in which for example more printed matter (publications and books) was published for the Romanian Hungarians in their own mother tongue than we Romanians had available for us, of course defined in relation to the proportion of Romanian Hungarians in the general population. Perhaps it is no bad thing, but it is bad that certain real, undeniable rights are frequently artificially extended and the demands and requests constantly proliferate as soon as they are acceded to. (But if one day we are asked in the most democratic possible way to pick up our rivers and move out of our Homeland, what will we Romanians do then? Shall we grant this request as well or what should we do!?)".<sup>1214</sup>

Transylvania had never been a simple " 'mixture of nations' " with the Dacian character initially predominating in economic, intellectual and spiritual relations, as proven by archaeological finds, followed by the Roman, then the Daco-Roman and ultimately the Romanian character shared by the Homeland. Hence the Romanians had never been compelled to have recourse to a myth accounting for their sudden arrival as if by magic. Neither mysticism nor mystification were integral to the Romanian style of thinking and operating. All that Transylvania and the Homeland had craved was objective, impartial research to reveal the past. The Hungarian presence in Transylvania assumed significant proportions for the first time following the Battle of Mohács.<sup>1215</sup> Prior to that, they had relied on the Székelys and Saxons they had imported to shore up their rule. The annals of history charted the persistent Hungarian reluctance to give the Romanians of Transylvania the credit they deserved with all the distortions this implied. Similarly, Hungarian attitudes towards events in Transylvania were diffracted through a faulty lens. The agricultural reform, decried

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<sup>1214</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp73-74.

<sup>1215</sup> Cf August 1526.

by Hungarians as exploitation, had in fact swept away the last bastions of Hungarian feudalism.<sup>1216</sup>

Socialist Romania perpetuated the ancient Daco-Romanian traditions. Peaceful cohabitation with other nationalities had been elevated to a principle of law. All citizens had the same rights and duties and at all levels of the state and Party apparatus, proportional representation was guaranteed. Never before had such strenuous efforts been made as through the policy pursued by the Romanian Communist Party. Hence the fears voiced by certain quarters in Hungary concerning the fate of the Hungarian minority were unfounded and represented a kind of unwarranted and unwanted interference in another sovereign state's affairs:

"The reason why this is the case is that Romania is a homogenous nation state, within the framework of which nine tenths of the population is Romanian (three quarters in Transylvania), alongside whom other nationalities also live and work".<sup>1217</sup>

Honest work was the sole arbiter of affinity and brotherhood, only it was capable of dealing a crushing blow to prejudice and Transylvania could proudly point to episodes of fraternal cooperation from its past.<sup>1218</sup>

Unsurprisingly the reception given to the work in Hungary was cool to say the least. Pál Kőteles accurately summarises Lăncrănjan's message that the threat to Romania posed by Hungarian irredentism has not vanished, indeed that Romania has been in danger from its neighbour since the dim and distant days when Árpád and his fellow chieftains attempted to subjugate the highly cultured Romanians:

"According to the author's preconception the wild, conquering nature of the Hungarians bears no resemblance to the Romanian people's 'deeply humane and understanding' character. To the author's mind drawing distinctions between Hungarian "peasants, workers and middle-classes" is completely unjustified. Every social stratum and individual has a propensity for oppressing others, for playing the role of the lord and master. We allegedly stubbornly preserve this aspiration within us even today, but we cannot help ourselves since what we are dealing with is a racial trait of our people. As a matter of fact we feature in European history books by virtue of this bent of ours to oppress others. Nobody on the other hand - the formula is

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<sup>1216</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp77-83.

<sup>1217</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp84-85, quotation on p85.

<sup>1218</sup> Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, pp84-87.

simplified to a black and white pair of polar opposites - wrote about the Romanians because the descendents of the Dacians always desired peace".<sup>1219</sup>

The fundamental difference in character meant that the duel between the two peoples had become permanent.<sup>1220</sup>

The author and playwright György Száraz<sup>1221</sup> felt compelled to join the fray:

"Who is not aware of - and who would deny? - the fact that there are discrepancies between Romanian and Hungarian conceptions of history? These are reflected in the different academic publications, the debates at conferences and they even filtered through to educational literature as well. Daco-Romanian continuity, the *honfoglalás*, the history of Romanian and Hungarian ethnic settlement and - of course - certain issues of Transylvanian history. These are, however, scientific issues, about which we can only expect an answer from science. Every people has a right to devise hypotheses concerning its ancient history obscured in darkness or even concerning later times. Like others, we have done this and still do so. The suppositions then either stand up to the test of scientific proof or not. (...)

It is a most understandable paradox that the more closely linked the histories of two peoples are the greater the tension, the debate, the scientific quarrels and the more distant they are from one another the greater the understanding. Historical consciousness is indeed an important constituent of national self-knowledge, of socialist patriotism. *In this particular sense* it is obviously political as well. But is it wise to reduce science to the "servant maid" of *laboured* politics in some measure according to the recipe of medieval theological thinking?

Lăncrănjan is obsessed with *priority*: priority in the territory, in religion, in culture, priority even in the "national character" and in physical and spiritual beauty. Let there be no misunderstanding: I am not disputing the Romanian view of history. I am not competent to do so, let the qualified experts deal with that, as indeed they are doing. In scientific issues Lăncrănjan is as little unqualified as I am. What he is up to is journalism and politics - and this is my business *as well*. His somewhat immoderate national pride, proclivity to idealise, his unhistorical and subjective romanticism, his

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<sup>1219</sup> Köteles, *op. cit.*, p 52, quotation p53.

<sup>1220</sup> Köteles, *op. cit.*, p53.

<sup>1221</sup> Lăncrănjan quotes from his piece *Ítéletidő*. Lăncrănjan, *op. cit.*, p82. Száraz (1930-1987), received the Attila József prize for literature in 1985.

priority, indeed, exclusivity complexes and even his mysticism wouldn't bother me sine they are his own affair, *as long as they really are his own affair*. Except that he does something I cannot abide in Hungarian authors or those of other nationalities: vindicating his inclinations at the expense of others, insulting them and what is more with pretensions to shaping awareness. What he does in it - regardless of *subjective good intentions* towards his own people - is irresponsible not just towards others, but also towards his own. He has his own opinion and a firm conviction that if a Hungarian historian has the temerity to hold a different view from his Romanian colleague then he can be nothing other than a bad neighbour, an irredentist, or, to use his favourite word, "scum" [...].

*Today* the continuity theories - irrespective of whether Romanians, Hungarians or others were in the Danubian Basin first! - are worthless from a practical point of view and they can only be the vehicles of politics if stretched.

[...]

Lăncrănjan projects cultural and political nationalism, racial imperialism, ethnic separatism and denationalisation back into the distant past and accuses the Hungarians of these crimes going back over the centuries".<sup>1222</sup>

With customary perspicacity, Száraz penetrates to the underlying logic:

"But something else lurks within this 'historical' line of argument: that for the 'late arrival' - if his 'Belatedness' and quality as 'occupier' means to be frank a thousand year past - there can be no *equal* rights, or if there are nevertheless then his equality is at most based on the generosity of the 'indigenous majority' and is exposed to the possible 'mood swings' of tolerance. In other words, even whilst equal he is still only a second-class citizen. In so far as he feels that he has a grievance and sees fit to raise his voice in protest he is guilty of a veritable crime against the state".<sup>1223</sup>

Száraz also dissects Lăncrănjan's idiosyncratic interpretation of loyalty:

"The concept of *loyalty* is more or less unambiguous. It encompasses civic allegiance, respect of the laws and beyond all this the positive emotional bond, in this particular case towards the *Romanian* people, its culture and history and the *shared* Socialist state. Lăncrănjan wants more. In the name of loyalty he demands that his

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<sup>1222</sup> György Száraz: *Egy furcsa könyvről*, Magvető Kiadó, Budapest, 1983, pp31-35. Emphasis in original.

<sup>1223</sup> Száraz, *op. cit.*, p93.



fellow citizens of a different nationality recognise that their ancestors were intruders, that their physical and intellectual creative activity stretching over several centuries are superfluous as they have nothing to do with Transylvania's becoming a cultural landscape. They themselves, however, if I translate Lăncrănjan's definition of the state of affairs into the vernacular, are not evictable, but under any circumstances mala fide squatters".<sup>1224</sup>

### 3.8 Béla Köpeczi's History of Transylvania

In 1986, Béla Köpeczi edited a three volume history of Transylvania under the aegis of the Hungarian Academy of the Sciences, which became an instant best-seller in Hungary.<sup>1225</sup> In the introduction, the authors stated their aim of widening intellectual horizons by turning their backs on the narrow provincialism, which had for so long been characteristic of Hungarian historiography and nurtured a nationalist consciousness.<sup>1226</sup> By disputing the central proposition of the Romanian title-deed claim (Romanian priority in Transylvania), however, they incurred the wrath of the *Conducător*.<sup>1227</sup>

That any deviation from the official Romanian version of Transylvania's past was reviled as malicious slander with an ulterior motive emerges clearly from Ceaușescu's attack on the History:

"I am not particularly worried, nor have I ever been worried, by certain reactionary, imperialist circles deliberately misrepresenting the accomplishments and activities of our people. In so doing they are merely acting in accordance with their class interests.

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<sup>1224</sup> Száraz, *op. cit.*, pp103-104.

<sup>1225</sup> *Erdély története*, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1986. On the Köpeczi history, see *Borderland*, pp43-4 and *Verdery*, pp219-210 and 244-6.

<sup>1226</sup> Köpeczi, *op.cit.*, Volume One, p4.

<sup>1227</sup> See Volume One, pp87-8 (on use of Latin in Dacia); p91 (absence of proof that Dacia was ever Romanised); p92 (the indigenous population not being urbanised and therefore not assimilated); p99 (ancient sources, such as Eutropius, testifying to the Roman withdrawal from Dacia and its abandonment); pp100-3 (thoroughly planned evacuation of the province, comparison with its more Western counterparts, which did not remain Romanised, even though they were under Roman rule for a considerably longer period and impact of the migratory waves) and pp104-6 (place names as indicators of ethnic persistence not betraying traces of continuity).

It is, however, incomprehensible that such things can crop up in one or other Socialist country. We do not demand that they should necessarily acquaint people with Romania's attainments. However I do believe that the absolute minimum demand should be that they do not sketch out a distorted picture of the work our people, the workers, are carrying out together with the Party leaders for the sake of socio-economic development and the construction of the Socialist and Communist order. Of course it is possible to argue about historical issues a great deal. But can anyone actually change history?! Can anyone alter the fact that 2500 years ago Herodotus described the Dacians inhabiting these lands, including today's Transylvania, Moldova and Muntenia, as "the most just and courageous of the Thracians"?<sup>1228</sup> Of course there might be some people who do not agree with Herodotus 2500 years on! But it is difficult for them to change something, which people who lived then saw first-hand and understood! Can someone change history, the fact that Burebista created a centralised state,<sup>1229</sup> that Decebal developed it further,<sup>1230</sup> that the Dacians

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<sup>1228</sup> The quotation is from his Histories IV, describing Darius's expedition of 514 B.C. against the Scythians to the north of the Danube delta (*Castellan*, p8). On Herodotus's writings, see *Oțetea*, pp42-4 and 54-6.

<sup>1229</sup> Burebista (circa 70 to 44 B.C.) was the first known king of a Dacian proto-state. Strabo wrote: "When Burebista, the Getian, assumed power, the nation was exhausted as a result of constant wars, but he strengthened it with military training, abstemious living and strict discipline, to such an extent that he created a powerful kingdom and subjugated most of the neighbouring populations to the Getians, so that even the Romans were afraid of him" (*Geography*, VII, quoted in *Castellan*, p9). He established a capital at Sarmizegetusa (*Gredistye/Grădiștea Muncelului*). *Oțetea* is categorical about his role: "Burebista's intention to change the shaky confederation of Geto-Dacian tribal unions – built in haste and rather as a transitory alliance – into a durable, well organized state is evidenced by his deeds" (*op.cit.*, p65). On Burebista, see *Oțetea*, pp64-8.

<sup>1230</sup> Tiberius set up the Roman province of Moesia in 15 A.D., to which Dobrudja was annexed a few years later. It was used as a base for forays against the barbarians. In the winter of 85-86 A.D. the Dacians, in league with other peoples invaded the province and killed its governor. Domitian decided to restore order, dividing the province into Upper and Lower Moesia for purposes of defence. General Cornelius Fuscus was put in charge of a punitive expedition, marching on Sarmizegetusa in the summer of 87 A.D. Durus (Diurpaneus), king of the Dacians, abdicated in favour of Decebalus, son of Scorilo who had ruled before him. Decebalus ambushed Fuscus, slaughtering his forces and capturing the standards of the legions. From then until Trajan's ascent to power in 98 A.D. Decebalus employed war and diplomacy in his dealings with Rome. Trajan wished to put an end to the threat the Dacians posed, eventually subduing them in 105 A.D. when his adversary Decebalus chose to commit suicide rather

fought against the Romans for centuries on end until the latter - it is true - defeated them? But in the absence of civilisation, in the absence of a state organisation, which were things the [Roman] notables of the time appreciated, they could not have done so. Who benefits from denying these realities? Is this not in actual fact the kind of policy, which runs counter to all kinds of interests of two peoples, the Hungarians and the Romanians, who have lived together over a long period of time and who have to go on living together?

Of course nobody can alter the reality of when the first Hungarian tribes arrived within the framework of the then general migratory movements of entire peoples and settled on the territory of today's Hungary or that part of the population also settled in Transylvania. But why should this otherwise well-known historical fact be indicated in such a way as to deny the existence of another people, although it had lived in these tracts for over 2500 years and had not departed elsewhere to make way for the itinerant tribes, but had fought and defended its lands and its existence? Why would they deny even the 12th century scholar, or as some consider him Hungarian leader, who wrote his well-known work about how a well-organised population lived in these regions?<sup>1231</sup> Why do matters proven by science - the archaeological finds, which the

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than being taken prisoner. His head was put on display in Rome (*Castellan*, pp10-12 and *Ofetea*, pp77-90).

<sup>1231</sup> The reference is to "P dictus magister", or Anonymous who wrote his *Gesta Hungarorum* around the middle of the thirteenth century. Consensus has been reached amongst researchers that Anonymous was notary to King Béla III (for which see László Veszprémy's afterword in Anonymous, *op.cit.*, p75). Anonymous mentions a "vlach", or Romanian, by the name of Gyalu as ruler of Transylvania when Tétény decided he would conquer it for himself and his descendants (Anonymous, *op.cit.*, p26 and for Tétény's victory and Gyalu's death, pp27-8). The Köpeczi history questions the reliability of the *Gesta* as a source as neither the colourful characters nor the skirmishes enlivening its pages are mentioned elsewhere (true of earlier foreign works and the original Hungarian *Gesta* as preserved in tradition). Moreover, archaeological remains do not corroborate his version (Köpeczi, *op.cit.*, p196). Anonymous had frequently been cited as an authority by Romanians, however, as the *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* shows: "When by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Hungarians led by Duke Tuhutum invaded Transylvania, the Roman inhabitants of these [parts] had a changed name, *Vlachs*, according to the earliest writer of Hungary, Anonymous, the notary of King Béla; at their head was their own Duke Gelu, who enjoyed supreme power but was unlucky in the war he started against the Hungarians for the defence of his own country, as he lost his throne and his life in that fight" (*Prodan*, p456). In his *Deliberate Falsification of History: Method and Style*, in *Romanian Review*, Volume 5, 1987, pp86-102 (henceforth *Popovici*), Titus Popovici opines: "The fury with which they reduce to naught the

world over form the basis for the reconstruction of a given historical period or set of events - have to be so lightly set aside in so far as written records are absent? In the days of the Ottoman Empire's occupation did the Romanian lands not fight and did they not preserve their autonomy? It is a well-known fact that in the Balkans they were alone in retaining their autonomy! Did Mircea defeat Baiazid with imaginary armies?<sup>1232</sup> Or did Ștefan cel Mare?<sup>1233</sup> Or did Mihai Viteazul, in whose armies numerous Székely units battled?<sup>1234</sup> Was the common battle of the Romanians and the Hungarians against the Ottoman Empire merely a figment of the imagination? Was János Hunyadi who ultimately became the head of the Hungarian state, an imaginary figure?<sup>1235</sup>

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hapless Anonymous, found guilty of having mentioned the existence of Romanian state formations in the area prior to Árpád's arrival is simply funny" (p91).

<sup>1232</sup> Mircea the Elder (Mircea cel Bătrîn) reigned from 1386-1418. In 1390 he sent an expedition to drive the Ottoman army out of Dobrudja, annexing the area himself. The following year, Ottoman irregular soldiers ransacked the Wallachian lowlands. In 1394 Sultan Bayezit I, nicknamed „Thunderbolt” also invaded Wallachia. A battle was fought on 10th October near Craiova. Although probably victorious, the Romanians were forced to withdraw to their capital of Țirgovîște. Two years later, Bayezit routed a large Christian army on 25th September at Nicopolis. The Sultan's downfall came in 1402 when he was taken prisoner by Tamerlane after the Battle of Ankara, dying a few months later (*Castellan*, pp36-7). On Mircea, see also *Oțetea*, pp194-6.

<sup>1233</sup> Stephen the Great (Ștefan cel Mare), ruler of Moldavia from 1457-1504 won a decisive victory against the Ottomans at the head of a force buttressed by Hungarian, Székely and Polish allies at Vaslui on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1475, earning him the epithet of “Christ's champion” from Pope Sixtus IV (*Castellan*, pp40-1). See also *Oțetea*, pp201-6.

<sup>1234</sup> Michael the Brave was ruler of Wallachia from 1593 to 1601. For further details, see footnote 1137, p334 above.

<sup>1235</sup> Ceaușescu, *România Szocialista Köztársaság Magyar és Német Dolgozói Tanácsainak Plénumai*, 1987. február26-27, Politikai Könyvkiadó, Bukarest, 1987, pp18-19. János Hunyadi (in the Romanian version Iancu of Hunedoara), son of a Romanian who had been elevated to the ranks of the nobility (thereby becoming Hungarian) was Governor of Hungary from 1446 to 1452. In 1441, he raided Serbian territory, beating the troops of the Bey of Smederevo. This and other victories made him the candidate of the papal administration to lead an international anti-Ottoman crusade, solicited by Byzantine Emperor John VIII. In the “long campaign” of 1443-4, Hunyadi marched as far as Sophia. Although no lands were regained, the Christian armies returned without having suffered a defeat. The Sultan sued for peace, but Cardinal Cesarini persuaded Hunyadi and the Hungarian king that promises to the infidel need not be kept. The campaign launched shortly afterwards proved disastrous. At the battle of Varna in 1444, the tide turned with the Ottomans winning decisively. Hunyadi's final hour of

Ceaușescu's desire to impose ideological homogeneity did not stop at the Hungarian-Romanian frontier, as his scathing comments show:

"In my opinion history [...] must serve the cause of bringing peoples closer together and of fraternity and not that of emphasising negative aspects. In the course of many historical events - I am thinking mainly of more recent periods - the ruling classes of one or other country were given a role to play. But negative moments in relations between various countries in a given historical era should not be dwelt upon. Instead the policy of the former exploiting, ruling classes should be rejected and the starting point be the necessity for us to evolve and perfect a new history, the history of friendship and cooperation. This applies in general to Europe and the rest of the world and all the more so to relations between Hungary and Romania!

It is difficult to comprehend the revival of Horthyist, fascist, chauvinist and even racist propositions. How can it be possible for a scientific academy to give its seal of approval to the publication of writings and works that offend other peoples? What breed of science is this? Whom does so-called science of this type serve if not the most reactionary imperialist circles? Such precepts by no means serve the cause of friendship and cooperation, the cause of Socialism!

We are in favour of exchanges of experience, but we staunchly oppose any variety of interference in internal affairs. We have never allowed that under any circumstances whatsoever, we do not allow it today and we shall never allow it in future! The Romanian people in its entirety, in complete unity, is responsible for solving Romania's problems and issues relating to Socialist development, its leading force, the Romanian Communist Party will solve them!"<sup>1236</sup>

Broadening relations with other Socialist countries, including immediate neighbours such as Hungary, had always been one of Romania's concerns. All attempts at distorting reality and then taking the distortions to international forums were at odds with the interests of both peoples. Ordinary Hungarians could not be tarred with the same brush as the handful of malicious individuals, but the episode had direct implications for the Hungarians in Transylvania:

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military glory came in 1456 at the battle of Belgrade, inducing the Sultan to retreat (*Kontler*, pp113-8). See also *Ojetea*, pp198-9; *Castellan*, p47 and József Held, *Hunyadi János pályája*, in *Bárdi*, pp59-65.

<sup>1236</sup> *Idem*, pp19-20.

"But how can we agree to augmenting the distribution of Hungarian [as in *anyaországí*] press and literary products in Romania when it is in this very press that insults are hurled at the workers of our country! We would be doing ourselves a disservice if we were to accept that. The press, radio and television, our instruments - literature, art - all must serve but one end: rapprochement, friendship and instruction in the spirit of Socialism and international solidarity. Any other interpretation and approach is at variance with the interests of the peoples today, tomorrow and forevermore!"<sup>1237</sup>

In the spate of imitations of Ceaușescu's original critique, other reviewers were even less charitable than he had been. Titus Popovici, describing the book as "a still-born product of a gang-rape of history"<sup>1238</sup> writes: "I am long past the age of surprises, and yet I can hardly find a word other than *shock* to describe my impressions after reading, pencil in hand, that piece of printed matter. *Disbelief* when confronted with samples of utter ignorance which would have made a high-school student flunk his test; *stupefaction* at a nonchalant display of 'historical' aberrations that have long since been disproved by the most elementary research of the most elementary sources; *anger* about the insults and less-than-urbane slander proffered by the authors in a patronizing tone".<sup>1239</sup>

This is indeed an eloquent testimony to the complete politicisation of the historical field and particularly any enquiry related to Hungarian minority identity.

## Conclusion

The Communist principle of classification did not in reality displace the nationalist one. Instead it appropriated nationalism for its own purposes. Internationalism, with its insistence that borders and national identity are immaterial in the face of the solidarity engendered by the experience of class oppression gave primacy to

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<sup>1237</sup> *Idem*, p21.

<sup>1238</sup> *Popovici*, p87.

<sup>1239</sup> *Popovici*, p87. Emphasis in original. Cf. also the review from 1987 by Ștefan Pascu, Mircea Mușat and Florin Constantiniu reproduced in Gale Stokes, *From Stalinism to Pluralism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, pp229-231.

occupation-based functional identity. Inter-ethnic strife was destined for the scrapheap, the obsolete by-product of the cynical manipulation of patriotism by a minority of bourgeois capitalists.

In Communist Romania, the rhetoric of international brotherhood disregarded the minority problem: it had been eliminated along with other forms of exploitation. No special protection of rights was needed. This refusal to admit the multi-national composition of the population was coupled with increasingly aggressive assimilation policies devised to prevent the Hungarians from reproducing their collective identity. Even "ethnic dilution" did not satisfy Ceaușescu: the total erasure of all symbolic and architectural tokens of a Hungarian presence was to have been the next stage of his plan to impose homogeneity on Romanian society.

Representations were rigorously controlled. The price of non-compliance with the official doctrine for intellectuals was the figurative banishment of non-publication. Ceaușescu's every statement was recycled by Party hacks who owed their positions to his good graces. History became the battleground upon which identity was fought over: exerting control over the past would determine the future.

In an interview conducted in *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca* on 18th January 1991, Sándor N. Szilágyi gave anecdotal evidence that the poison had eventually done its work: "In general people did not take the Ceaușescu-style propaganda seriously because day after day they encountered facts that proved the exact opposite. If they heard that the Romanian standard of living was on a par with the average in the developed world whilst they could see that there was nothing at all in the shops then it was obvious that they did not believe that they were well off. As far as nationalist manipulation was concerned, however, the contradiction between the facts and the propaganda spiels was not completely obvious to the Romanian masses because they were simply deprived of authentic information. In this instance therefore the preventive reflex could not function.

For this reason the masses were completely at the mercy of nationalist propaganda. Many Romanians to this very day only know as much about the Hungarians as they were informed about them during the Ceaușescu era. But the real problem is not so much that the Romanian masses do not, as it were, know anything about the Hungarians as it is that what little they do know is all wrong. Propaganda of this type sooner or later has its influence and this became palpable before long in everyday contacts as well. The reason I venture to say this is that in those days, from 1972

onwards, I lived in Bucharest. From several points of view the capital was a quite different environment from Transylvania. If someone challenged me on the bus as to why I was speaking Hungarian, as this was Romania after all, I knew for certain that the individual in question was from Transylvania. Someone from Bucharest didn't say that kind of thing. The Hungarians were so far removed from him; he had so little to do with them that he was remarkably tolerant towards the Hungarians. Latterly, however, particularly if remarks of this type were made by younger persons, I could unfortunately no longer be certain that they were not from Bucharest, the influence of nationalist propaganda had become so tangible".<sup>1240</sup>

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<sup>1240</sup> In István Schlett: *Kisebbség nézőben. Beszélgetések és dokumentumok*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1993, p36.



## Conclusion

The two major identity paradigms of recent years can be encapsulated in the concepts of essence and construct.<sup>1241</sup> Postmodern critiques have claimed that contingency, discontinuity, fragmentation, rupture, dissipation, diffusion and reflexivity have displaced the certainties and stability of modernity.<sup>1242</sup> Identity is a project, a task to be performed, day in day out.<sup>1243</sup> Essence and construct are not mutually exclusive, however, as my arguments concerning principles of classification and materiality (which is based on shared classifications, meanings and institutions, in short, culture as opposed to genetic predispositions or racial traits) demonstrate. Although material identities are being challenged they have not been eroded to the extent of irrelevance: they continue to reflect the way the social world is organised, permeating the individual's sense of self and providing an overall narrative framework within which the significance of events and the course of lives can be interpreted and a context where (to use Keupp's phrase) „identity work“ can take place.

Principles of classification are indispensable for the functioning of any society. They are historically and culturally relative, drawing the boundaries of who belongs to the collectivity and who does not, limiting the repertoire of possible new ideas by defining (directly, with the active intervention of the state as under Communism or less obviously on the free market of ideas as under capitalism inside a nation-state) the criteria of relevance (what is interesting and what is not). They thus establish an „identity of identities“,<sup>1244</sup> which takes precedence over all others.

Institutions embody principles of classification, simultaneously exploiting them for purposes of legitimation. The privileged identity is cast as „material“, corresponding to nature and dropping out of sight into the realm of the taken for granted. This does not mean that it is thereby exempt from change: like any identity, it too is the product

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<sup>1241</sup> Cf. Gleason, *op. cit.*, p918, where, contrasting the work of Erik H. Erikson and „the sociologists“, he summarises the main difference between their respective positions: „identity is to be understood as something internal that persists through change or as something ascribed from without that changes according to circumstance“. Cf. also Douglas Kellner's *Popular Culture and the Construction of Postmodern Identities*, pp141-3 and 157-8 in *Lash*, pp141-175 and Keupp, pp30 and 40-56.

<sup>1242</sup> Keupp, p30.

<sup>1243</sup> Keupp, pp30 and 60.

<sup>1244</sup> Billig, p10.

of interaction and experience. The exigencies of the present combine with the perceived outlook for the future in settling which aspects of identity are given emphasis, which are deemed virtuous and worthy of cultivation and which recede temporarily into the background. These shifts are reflected in representations, whether editorials or history textbooks.

Where the nation-state takes root as the recognised unit of sovereignty over a territory, it displays the characteristics of an institution, presenting itself as the most rational form of government, keen to appear self-evident. Nationhood is the principle of classification it employs and the identity to which it accords particular value is that said to inhere in the nation. Metaphors of kinship (whether „blood” or „spiritual” ties) are advanced as explanations of what binds compatriots to each other and to the land they inhabit (in turn fostering an emotional attachment to the national home). Inequalities in status or between classes and disparities in the distribution of capital (economic, cultural and social) are downplayed. What matters where nationalism prevails as the legitimating doctrine (the political articulation of the principle of classification) is similarity amongst members of the collectivity (and, by extension their material difference from all other collectivities). Communism, by contrast, is founded upon a principle of classification situated entirely in the world of human transactions (as opposed to the prior world of the natural), rejecting material in favour of functional (in this instance work-related) identities with certain categories enjoying greater prestige than others. Although national content was frowned upon (at least in the Stalinist era), national forms (and symbols, such as anthems, currencies and flags) were retained (albeit with concessions to socialism).

In the case study of Hungarians in Romania, two periods may be distinguished between. Firstly, the interwar years, where the nationalist principle of classification reigned supreme and secondly the post-war decades through to the end of the 1980s where Communism initially attempted to assert its own principle of classification (brotherhood of the proletariat against the unscrupulous exploiters across frontiers, eradication of the oppressing classes at home) unsullied by nationalist sentiment before abandoning such pretensions altogether under Ceaușescu. In the latter phase of national Communism, nationalism with a thin veneer of socialism was the order of the day.

Under the national principle of classification, national minorities and „submerged” nations<sup>1245</sup> are anomalies, even though the ideal nation-state (one in which there is complete cultural and ethnic correspondence between rulers and ruled) is an elusive creature. Their material and functional identities do not coincide, making them not a mote, but a beam in the eye of the majority. The plight of the Hungarians in Transylvania points to the limits of citizenship as a salient marker of identity. On paper, they were (are) Romanian, they carried (and carry) Romanian passports, they have been officially incorporated into the Romanian state since 1921, yet culturally, linguistically and ethnically they were (are) different and have never been fully accepted into the wider collectivity. The consistency and indeed persistence of negative attitudes towards them cannot be understood outside of the concepts of material and functional identity.

The identity of the majority is portrayed as unproblematic, the norm from which the minority deviates and to which it must accommodate. The external component of identity therefore assumes far greater importance for minorities. They cannot simply shrug off what is being written about them. To put it slightly differently, they are unable to escape the suffocating weight of ascriptions since they do not enjoy a monopoly on self-definition. This has implications for the representations, which they use to depict themselves in the public sphere. Particularly where the surrounding environment is openly hostile towards them, they cannot afford to respond in kind. The inbuilt power imbalance between majority and minority exacerbates the latter's vulnerability and dependence upon the goodwill of the wider community for an equitable share of the available resources. Thus minorities are continually pushed on the defensive, compelled to justify their resistance to assimilation.

In practice, the Hungarians were excluded from the Romanian definition of the nation (only to be criticised for remaining outside it) as shown by the discriminatory legislation passed against them regardless of whether the administration responsible for it was nationalist or Communist. These laws were designed to erode their autonomous identity as part of a deliberate homogenisation strategy by undermining their financial basis and hence capacity for independent cultural activity. Collective identities require maintenance through rituals, symbols and representations. Of these, representations were the most readily available to the Hungarians (the other two even

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<sup>1245</sup> Cf. *Smith 1991*, p164.

more open to being deliberately misconstrued as expressions of irredentism). By starving them of intellectual sustenance through restricting access to higher education opportunities in their mother tongue, Romanian politicians were launching an attack on their capacity to reproduce as a community with a separate identity. Not only was this an effort to cut off the supply of intellectuals (as political leaders and cultural producers), but it also aimed at drastically reducing the potential audience receptive to their message.

The link between representations, identity and politics becomes clear: adaptation to new circumstances is not a matter of cynical opportunism, but of survival where the principle of classification based on nationhood stays in place, but traditional assumptions have been overturned. The need for adjustment and reassessment is mirrored in the representations dating from the before the Communist takeover. The Hungarian minority struggled to retain a degree of control over how it was seen (rather than accepting the stigmatising labels of inferiority). In this it was split between a conventional application of the national principle of classification (according to which they considered themselves Hungarians artificially severed from the mother country) and declarations of loyalty to an alternative locus of identity (whereby the sacred landscape was that of Transylvania rather than Hungary and the focus moved to the distinctive Transylvanian traits within the broader notion of Hungarian essence), which preserved the idea of material difference, but situated it within narrower bounds in an effort to rebut the charges of separatism or disloyalty to the Romanian state.

Under Communism, the doctrine of the international solidarity of the working classes at first held out the hope of integration, but it was dashed by Ceaușescu's reassertion of the national principle of classification (socialist gloss and all), which left the minority worse off than before as it was not at liberty to contest the official definitions imposed from on high. Not only was absolute conformity extracted, but any gravitation towards Hungary, however innocent, was branded suspect. Being a loyal minority citizen involved total and unquestioning acceptance of second-class status whilst praising the regime for its open-mindedness, liberalism and generosity. Such lip service (paid in the representations) was used on the one hand by the regime to rubber-stamp its policies and on the other by the minority intellectuals to defend the few rights that remained and stave off further restrictions in the future (as well as decrease the likelihood of a sudden withdrawal of resources in the present). The

conciliatory tone of minority publications was neither expected of nor matched by Romanian authors who were permitted to indulge in anti-Hungarian diatribes without fear of legal repercussions as their overt nationalism was harnessed to bolster Ceaușescu's position.

Communism in Romania (and elsewhere) was an experiment in the large-scale control of knowledge and opinion (by implementing and enforcing its principle of classification) and, as such, a test of the strength of representations.<sup>1246</sup> The Party laid claim to a monopoly of wisdom and rationality, all but eradicating the distinction between the political and cultural fields. In the remunerative mode of control (of which post-1956 Hungary was a prime example)<sup>1247</sup> we witness „soft warping” of knowledge and representations (with the safety vent of critical thought and carefully regulated dissent), whilst in the symbolic-ideological mode (Katherine Verdery) we encounter „hard warping” accompanied by tight allocative control of resources by the centre.

Any principle of classification influences knowledge and representations. Under Communism, however, state interference in setting the parameters of the acceptable and unacceptable was direct. From then on it was up to the intellectuals themselves whether they wanted to show voluntary restraint (by avoiding controversy and with it inconvenience and harassment), openly collaborate and reap the rewards of reputation and funding dispensed by the state or risk the penalties of outright dissent (for example banishment from the elite). The benefits of ideological purity could be substantial, as Verdery shows: The stakes are who gets to write the school manuals that present a particular version of reality, or to produce an official history, or to define the literary 'canon', or to render the lineage of philosophical knowledge; whose books will be published and in what press runs; whose projects will receive investments that will facilitate still other investments later; whose work will receive

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<sup>1246</sup> In a nutshell, if representations were omnipotent or sufficient in themselves to convince populations that their institutions were the pinnacle of human achievement the Communist regimes might very well still be in place today. Instead, the phraseology of class struggle rang increasingly empty as Communism was hollowed out from within by its adoption of the forms (and content) of nationalism coupled with economic discontent, environmental degradation and the other factors dealt with in detail elsewhere (for example, in *Kemp*, pp83-6, 143-4, 174-5, 189-190 and 195-7).

<sup>1247</sup> For the modes of control, see *Verdery*, pp85-6. On its application in Kádár's Hungary, see Tőkés, *op.cit.*, p254.

prizes – valuable not because they increase sales and, therefore, incomes, as in the capitalist world, but because the mere receipt of prizes enhances one's claims to future allocations and promotes the values on which one has staked one's work (which may include, covertly, values of resistance to the totalising effects of Party rule). Authors under socialism need mass publics to buy their works less than they need the attention of bureaucrats who will fund their projects)".<sup>1248</sup>

The tightest grip on representations was kept by the symbolic-ideological mode: monitoring of academic output was more stringent, there was less leeway for „within-system" criticism<sup>1249</sup> and inclusion in the ranks of approved intellectuals more difficult to achieve.

That the boundaries of the field of cultural production are fixed in relation to other fields (an issue neglected by Bourdieu) emerges particularly clearly under Communism. The role to be played by intellectuals was stipulated by its function-orientated principle of classification, according to which manual labour earned the highest respect (if not remuneration). It was impossible for intellectuals to dispel the faint aura of suspicion clinging to them due partly to their structural ambiguity<sup>1250</sup> and partly to the fact that they were intrinsically less biddable. If the workers built socialism with their hands, writers built it with pen, ink or typewriters, their contributions channelled to service the immediate needs of a given undertaking, whether extolling the virtues of the latest Five Year Plan or those of socialist patriotism. In the symbolic-ideological mode official speeches by the venerated leader and the Party programmes adopted to translate them into policy set the agenda for social, political and cultural life and the tone for representations.<sup>1251</sup> They were not immune to pressure from external events (as noted in relation to 1956 and 1968), rendering the field less stable. Ceaușescu's „declaration of independence" from 1964, for example, opened the floodgates for nationalist vindications of Romania's separate path.<sup>1252</sup> Orthodoxy could rapidly be demoted to heresy (injecting an element of insecurity into cultural production).

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<sup>1248</sup> Verdery, p94.

<sup>1249</sup> Tőkés, *op.cit.* p168.

<sup>1250</sup> See Bauman, *Intellectuals*, pp178-180.

<sup>1251</sup> Cf. *Hetven év* p70 on Romania in the 1970s.

<sup>1252</sup> Similarly, the „July theses" had very clear effects on the literary field, for which see Verdery, pp186-7.

Even under (capitalist) free market conditions, however, cultural producers from minorities are subject to additional restrictions. With their smaller target audiences they are generally less attractive to publishers (from the point of view of expected profit margins), although it can enhance a publisher's reputation to showcase their work (thereby compensating for the financial outlay with symbolic capital). In the case of the Hungarians in Transylvania a niche readership certainly existed (complemented by potentially greater numbers in Hungary), but from the very outset they were hampered by the purchasing power of minority members (which plummeted after the civil servants were sacked en masse, the loss of income from land holdings and the other problems discussed). Moreover they had to cater for local tastes, contend with unequal access to starting capital as well as bearing in mind the need to avoid incurring the displeasure of majority figures with the authority to clamp down on the minority as a whole. In short they had to devote the lion's share of their efforts to treading carefully both before and after the Communist takeover. The fragility of internal unity within the minority, the virtual consensus on the importance of preserving it in order to make the most effective use of whatever political clout the Hungarians did possess to improve their lot and the duty to reproduce the collective identity acted as further constraints upon the intellectuals and the content of their representations. The ceaseless verbal onslaught against the Hungarians could not simply be ignored: the stream of accusations and slanders had to be refuted and loyalty proven.

In spite of having control over the instruments of identity reproduction (rituals, symbols and manipulation of representations) Ceaușescu did not attain his objective of cultural assimilation of the Hungarians. This led him to pursue ever more repressive policies towards them, drastically curtailing their contacts with friends and relatives outside Romania's borders, forcing them to use Romanian place names instead of the equivalents in their mother tongue and so on. These measures would have culminated in the physical demolition of monuments to the Hungarian presence in Transylvania to match the symbolic displacement accomplished through the rewriting of history, which projected (non-existent) ethnic homogeneity into the Dacian past and cast the Hungarians as interlopers, invading barbarians, unwelcome guests. In the meantime, ethnic dilution through incentives for Romanians to resettle in the urban centres of Transylvania and the simultaneous moving of Hungarians to predominantly Romanian areas under the guise of work placements was devised to

erode the minority. Had the *Conducător* not been overthrown, the Hungarians' future had promised to be very bleak.

With the demise of Communism throughout Central and Eastern Europe the national principle of classification has been re-established, sometimes with devastating consequences (as in former Yugoslavia). The Hungarians of Transylvania continue to be regarded as materially different from their Romanian fellow countrymen, the targets of agitators making a career out of stirring up strife.<sup>1253</sup> What is striking is the continued irreconcilability of the Hungarian and Romanian visions of the nation, the monistic and endogamous tendencies of the latter proving remarkably resilient to change, all external influences being treated by it as alien and hostile. Although more pluralistic, some of the monism of the collectivity against which it defines itself has rubbed off on the Hungarians.<sup>1254</sup> Perhaps the prospect of accession to the European Union (dependent upon fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria, which include respect of minority rights)<sup>1255</sup> will yield sufficient motivation to tackle the outstanding problems.

There are no grounds for complacency, however, either in East or West. As Michael Billig's banal nationalism thesis proves, the national principle of classification is alive and well, going unobtrusively about its business of legitimation, providing us with our „identity of identities”. „Civic” and „ethnic” nationalism both avail themselves of it, so that identity matters. Where extremism and intolerance are stoked by social and economic discontent „our” nationalism could easily become indistinguishable from „theirs”.

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<sup>1253</sup> The most obvious example being Gheorghe Funar, mayor of *Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca*. On his recent excesses, see the articles in *Magyar Nemzet*, 1st September and 7th November, 2003.

<sup>1254</sup> On the problems encountered by the Hungarian minority in post-Ceausescu Romania, see Előd Kincses, *Marosvásárhely fekete márciusa*, Püski, Budapest, 1990 and *Fehér könyv az 1990. március 19. és 20-i események Marosvásárhelyen*, Püski, Budapest, 1991; Vladimir Tismaneanu, *The Quasi-Revolution and Its Discontents: Emerging Political Pluralism in Post-Communist Romania*, in *East European Politics and Societies*, Volume 7 (2), 1993, pp309-348 and Andrei Marga, *Cultural and Political Trends in Romania Before and After 1989*, in *East European Politics and Societies*, Volume 7 (1), 1993, pp14-32. On the more inclusive Hungarian approach, see Judit Boda Pálók, *The Protection of National and Ethnic Minorities' Rights in Hungary*, in *Romsics 1999*, pp317-345.

<sup>1255</sup> On the Copenhagen criteria, see Desmond Dinan, *Ever Closer Union, An Introduction to European Integration*, Second Edition, Macmillan, Houndmills, 1999, pp190-1.



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